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MARVEL PREVIEW PRESENTS

BIZARRE ADVENTURES™

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STAN LEE presents:
MARVEL PREVIEW
featuring
BIZARRE ADVENTURES

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IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT...

Actually, it was a grey, rather cold day in November. I had just experienced my final conference with the editor of a now defunct comic book company, and was thoroughly disgusted.

Also, incensed. This so-called editor had just put me through a totally uncalled for series of travails, and I was beside myself with anger (whew!).

Now, I'd worked for Marvel Comics before (I don't recall offhand at what, exactly, but I had, really).

Marv Wolfman was editing the line at the time, and I'm sure he was just delighted to see this moist, shambling mess (me) shamble into his office. Also in said office was one Len Wein, a comics writer of some repute. Politely concealing his revulsion at my appearance, Marv gestures at me to sit. I do so.

"So," says Marv. "What's new at (now defunct comic book company)?"

"Oh, this and that," replies Chaykin, ever cagey. Cagier still, he continues, "how would you like me to work for you?"

"Oh," says Len. "That this and that. Lots of that going around. Heh, heh."

"Sure," replies Marv. "What would you like to do?" (As always, Marv comes up with the tough questions.)

It should be noted here, briefly, that Len and I had been talking, for some time, about working together. Cleverly recalling this, I shot back with —

"Oh, I don't know, exactly. What do you want to do, Len?"

Len looks at me, puzzled. I continue unstoppable.

"For the past few months I've been playing with the thirties; New York in the thirties. A really heavy, intense, vaguely mystical sort of New York hero. The Shadow, Doc Savage, that sort of thing."

"How about the other side of that character? The light side. The Spirit, Plastic Man type side. The TA-DA!! California side?"

"O.K.," says Len, interested. "Who is he?"

Now, between you and me, I had no idea what I was talking about. But, when in doubt, shovel it deeper, so ——

"He's a gambler, see. Lives on a gambling ship anchored off Los Angeles... outside the three mile limit."

"He works as a hero because he's a compulsive gambler; constantly overextended at the tables, he charges high prices to perform mostly heroic, occasionally shady deeds."

"His girlfriend is his landlord, the owner of the ship." (I was getting hot.)

"His milieu is Hollywood, late thirties. You know, screwy, ballhooly Hollywood. Movies, cuties, mobsters, sin — all the good stuff."

Much interest is evinced by Messrs. Wolfman and Wein, whose day I have obviously disrupted with this rambling.

"Go home," says Marv, "and come back with a name for this guy and we'll take it in to Archie."

Next day. I had wracked my brains, trying as many clever, superhero type names as I could come up with. Zip. Nothing. Crapola. Only one name seemed interesting and I was sure no one would go for it.

"So," says Marv, "What's the story?"

"Well... Dominic Fortune."

No response. Then smiles.
"I like it."

"No kidding." (Whew... and further cartoon noises.)

Len came up with Sabbath Raven, and the Mississippi Queen, and together we plotted six Fortune stories — two of which you hold in your hand, one of which you'll probably see sometime, and three of which have never been realized.

I love this guy. Fortune is everything a good comic book character is — tough, heroic, good looking — and a bit of a butthead. It is the butthead part I like best.

Read these stories. I hope you like them. I love them.

NOTES ON "THE POWER BROKER RESOLUTION"

If you were fortunate enough to have been at Toronto's Cosmicon Comics Convention back in 1975, you probably caught a fleeting glimpse of our first bizarre adventurer. There, in the art display room, were a series of exquisitely rendered pages — still unadorned of word balloons and captions — featuring the latest devil-may-care creation of one Howard Chaykin. It wasn't until months later, after Len Wein had turned in his script and Annette Kawecki had lettered the wordage, that I learned the name of this nut-case in the thirties jumpsuit... Dominic Fortune.

On the preceding page, Mr. Chaykin — in his own inimitable style — relates the heretofore unrevealed story of how Dom Fortune came to be. That story — in and of itself — is a dandy little yarn. It's fast, fun, breezy... a lot like Fortune himself.

You see, Dominic Fortune is not your average hero. He gambles. He carouses. He does it for the money.

But, on the other side of the coin, he is handy with a gun, fast on his feet, and probably a good dancer. He also tends to take on characters who are somewhat less than upright when it comes to good deportment and citizenship. In other words, if you were in a jam — and you could afford his services — Fortune would definitely be the guy to have on your side.

And you'd better believe that his exploits qualify as **bizarre** adventures! Take, for example, our first story — "The Power Broker Resolution!" Like all of Fortune's adventures, it takes place in and around Hollywood, 1938... a wild-and-woolly, post-depression, pre-war, tinsel and glamor world where fantasy and reality maintain an uneasy truce. Moreover, this particular tale could quite easily be sub-titled "What If Charles Foster Kane Sold Out the United States?"

Pretty bizarre, eh?

Well, other than that, there's not really a lot more to say about Dom Fortune. He is, after all, a fairly straightforward guy... no big pretensions... just pay your money, point him at the villain, and let him do the rest!

——R.S.

Dominic Fortune:
RESOLUTIONS!
THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANOTHER TOWN LIKE HOLLYWOOD IN 1938... AND THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANOTHER MAN LIKE... FORTUNE!
the POWER BROKER RESOLUTION!

Script: LEN WEIN Art: HOWARD CHAYKIN

ON A CRISP NIGHT, THE SOUNDS OF GAMING AND GAMESTERS ABOARD THE "MISSISSIPPI QUEEN" CAN BE HEARD THE FULL THREE MILES AND ONE YARD AWAY ON THE CALIFORNIA COAST.
THE NOISE IS JOYOUS, BOISTEROUS, DESPERATE--

--AND IT ALL BUT DROWNS OUT THE VOICE OF MISS SABBATH RAVEN, PROPRIETRESS OF THE "QUEEN", AS SHE SHOWS A POTENTIAL CLIENT THRU THE SHIP.
IF I KNOW DOMINIC, WE'LL FIND HIM IN THE BACK ROOM--
--BUSILY LOSING THIS MONTH'S RENT MONEY.

YOU MAKE IT SOUND AS IF HE DOES IT OFTEN.
CONSTANTLY.
BUT DOESN'T HIS LANDLORD OBJECT?
I CAN'T AFFORD TO.
YOU?

UM-HMM. DOM RENTS THE "QUEEN'S" TOP DECK AS HIS LIVING QUARTERS, PUTS HIM CLOSER TO THE ACTION, I GUESS.
BESIDES--SINCE HE LOSES HIS "LONG GREEN" AT MY TABLES, I WIN EITHER WAY.
YEP. THERE HE IS. C'MON--I'LL INTRODUCE YOU.
EVENING, SABBATH. THAT'S--UH--FOURTEEN MONTHS I OWE YOU NOW.

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'VE JUST SET A NEW WORLD'S RECORD.
MR. DOMINIC FORTUNE, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT MRS. CAROL EINHORN. I WAS JUST TELLING HER WHAT AN ABOMINABLE GAMBLER YOU ARE.
I KNOW. I CAN STILL SEE THE DOLLAR SIGNS IN YOUR LOVELY BLUE EYES.
IS THIS BUSINESS, MRS. EINHORN...OR PLEASURE?

UNFORTUNATELY BUSINESS, MR. FORTUNE. I--ER--I WANT YOU TO KIDNAP MY HUSBAND FOR ME!
RATHER DRASTIC WAY TO LAND YOURSELF A MAN, ISN'T IT?

MR. FORTUNE, PLEASE--THIS IS NO JOKING MATTER!
--AND I NEED YOUR HELP TO COLLECT IT!
MY HUSBAND OWES ME MORE THAN $250,000--

DON'T BOTHER COUNTING ON YOUR FINGERS, DARLING. TEN PERCENT OF A QUARTER MILLION IS ENOUGH FOR YOU TO PAY YOUR BACK RENT--
--AND STILL HAVE A LITTLE LEFT OVER TO LOSE AT THE TABLES.
MRS. EINHORN--SUPPOSE WE GO UP ON DECK AND DISCUSS YOUR LITTLE PROBLEM.
MY "LITTLE PROBLEM" IS QUITE SIMPLE, MR. FORTUNE. MY EX-HUSBAND, JACOB EINHORN, OWES ME 250 THOUSAND IN BACK ALIMONY--
--AND HE REFUSES TO PAY IT!
YOU COULD TAKE THE MATTER TO THE COURTS--HAVE HIM SERVED WITH A SUMMONS TO SHOW CAUSE WHY HE DOESN'T PAY.
I'VE SENT THREE PROCESS SERVERS TO SKYCLIFF ALREADY, MR. FORTUNE... THE LAST TWO NEVER RETURNED.
JACOB DIDN'T BECOME A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE BY THROWING HIS MONEY AROUND FREELY, MR. FORTUNE. HE STILL HAS THE FIRST DOLLAR HE EVER EARNED BRONZED ON THE MANTLE--
--AND HE LIKES HIS PRIVACY!
SOUNDS LIKE A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK.
AN IMPOSSIBLE NUT TO CRACK, ACTUALLY. SKYCLIFF IS A VERITABLE FORTRESS! IT SITS ATOP THE PALISADES, OVERLOOKING THE PACIFIC ON ONE SIDE--AND ON THE OTHER SIDE, IT...
WELL, HERE--SEE FOR YOURSELF! I BOUGHT A HANDMADE MAP OF THE PLACE WITH ME.
MINEFIELDS? THE MAN DOESN'T PLAY GAMES, DOES HE?
AH, WELL--THERE'S NOTHING LIKE AN OCCASIONAL CHALLENGE TO KEEP A MAN FIT.
OKAY, MRS. EINHORN--YOU'VE HIRED YOURSELF A BILL COLLECTOR. JUST LET ME BORROW THIS MAP FOR A WHILE--
"--SO I CAN TRY TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GET PAST THE FRONT DOOR."
THERE'S SKYCLIFF JUST AHEAD, SABBATH. NOW KEEP THIS CRATE STEADY, WILL YOU?
MY KNEES ARE TURNING TO YOGURT!

DON'T WORRY, POM DARLING--I WOULDN'T WANT TO LOSE MY SINGLE BIGGEST SOURCE OF INCOME.
THEN ARE YOU SURE THIS GIZMO WILL WORK, SABBATH?
ABSOLUTELY, DARLING. THE WING-KITE IS GUARANTEED. I GET MY MONEY BACK IF IT FAILS.
SWELL.
THEN, IN THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF THE BARD HIMSELF--
--HERE GOES NOTHIN'!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW? IT WORKS!
NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS RIDE THE AIR CURRENTS RIGHT INTO EINHORN'S BACKYARD!
JUST A LITTLE FANCY MANEUVERING AND... HUH?
CAUGHT A DOWN-DRAFT!
I'M GOING TO HIT THE CLIFF--!
SKRAKKT!
IMPACT SHATTERED ONE WING--!
AND I'M GONNA BE SPLATTERED HALFWAY DOWN THE COAST... UNLESS...
WHEW! NOW I KNOW HOW A MANHATTAN STRAP-HANGER FEELS!
STILL, I CAN'T JUST HANG AROUND HERE ALL DAY--
--SO I MAY AS WELL START CLIMBING!
SO FAR, SO GOOD. MAYBE THIS NUT WON'T BE AS HARD TO CRACK AS IT LOOKED.

BETTER GET RID OF THIS WIND-RIG AND MAKE A QUICK RECON OF THE GROUNDS BEFORE...
SNAP!
EH?
YANKEE--YOU DIE!
ONE OF EINHORN'S GUARD'S--!
NO--A SOLDIER! JAPANESE FROM THE UNIFORM!
BUT WHAT'S A JAP SOLDIER DOING...
BETTER WORRY ABOUT THAT AFTER I PUT BRIGHT-BOY HERE OUT OF ACTION!
--AND SINCE I CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE ANYBODY STUMBLING OVER HIS BODY--
THAK
GOT TO KEEP HIM QUIET SO HE CAN'T ALERT ANYONE--
"--I'M AFRAID IT'S-- BOMBS AWAY!"
THE DEATH-SCREAM IS BRIEF, LOST AMID THE SHRIEK OF THE GULLS AND THE ETERNAL POUNDING OF THE SURF
I DISLIKE KILLING ANYONE--BUT BUDDY BUDDHA INTENDED TO MAKE SLICED STEAK OUT OF ME WITH THIS SO.
UH-OH, HERE COMES

SPLANG
AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOTICED HIS CHUM IS AMONG THE MISSING!
THIS GUY WANTS MY BLOOD--AND HE WANTS IT BAD!
HE'S LIABLE TO TAKE IT, TOO
HE'S A LOT BETTER MAN WITH A BLADE THAN I AM!
ACROSS THE NIPPON SOLDIER'S FACE AS HE DRAWS BACK FOR THE KILLING STROKE
SINKS DEEP INTO THE BOLE
THUNK!
--AND IS SPLINTERED BY A SWIFTLY-SWUNG FIST!
--BUT SOMETIMES DIRTY POOL IS THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN!
SWUCK!
I SUCKERED HIM INTO THAT SHOT--
--WHICH IS REALLY DIRTY POOL, I GUESS--
A BODY HAS JOINED THE FIRST BENEATH THE WATERS AT THE BASE OF THE CLIFF
ONE THING IS--WHY? WHY WERE TWO JAPANESE SOLDIERS GUARDING THE ESTATE OF AN AMERICAN PRIVATE CITIZEN?
ONE THING IS CERTAIN--I WON'T LEARN THE ANSWER OUT HERE!
GOT TO FIND A WAY INSIDE BEFORE... HUH?

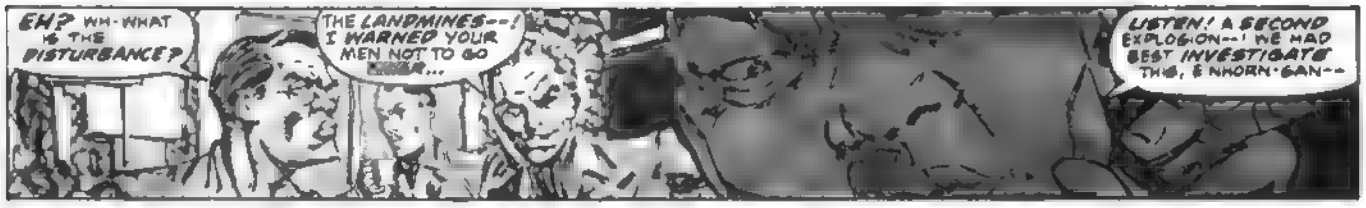
A JAPANESE BOMBER--A SALLY, I THINK--HIDDEN BENEATH A CAMOUFLAGE NET!
THERE IS MOST DEFINITELY SOMETHING FISHY GOING ON HERE--
--AND THE SOONER I GET IN THERE THE SOONER I'LL FIND OUT WHAT IT IS!
CAT-LIKE, DOMINIC FORTUNE CLAMBERS UP THE NURSERY WALL--AND IS QUICKLY LOST AMONG THE SHADOWS.

A SHORT WHILE LATER, HE REAPPEARS--HIS SWIFT SEARCH OF THE HOUSE'S UPPER FLOORS HAVING PROVIDED LITTLE IN THE WAY OF ANSWERS.
IT IS THEN HE HEARS THE VOICES.
...AND YOUR HOSPITALITY IS MOST GRACIOUS, ENHORN-SAN
...BUT ARE YOU CERTAIN IT IS SAFE FOR US ALL TO MEET LIKE THIS?
MY ENTIRE DOMESTIC STAFF HAS BEEN GIVEN THE EVENING OFF...YOUR OWN MEN PATROL THE GROUNDS OUR PRIVACY IS GUARANTEED.
IF NOT, IT'S RATHER LATE IN THE GAME TO WORRY ABOUT IT, COLONEL ITO. THOUGH I ASSURE YOU THERE IS NOTHING TO TROUBLE US!
THEN I SUGGEST WE GET TO--AH--BUSINESS, ENHORN-SAN
OF COURSE--BUSINESS! BASICALLY, YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER...
THE PROPOGANDA THAT MY PUBLISHING EMPIRE CAN PROVIDE ON BEHALF OF YOUR CAUSE IS IMMEASURABLE!
THAT, COUPLED WITH THE INFORMATION FREQUENTLY LEAKED TO ME BY VARIOUS RELIABLE SOURCES, CAN HELP TO TURN THE TIDE OF THE FUTURE--

--AND TURN IT IN YOUR FAVOR!
YOU CAN TRULY DO ALL THAT, ENHORN-SAN?

THAT, COLONEL ITO--AND MORE!
WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN AERIAL PHOTOS OF THE U.S.A.'S MOST VULNERABLE MILITARY BASES? PEARL HARBOR, IN HAWAII, IS A PARTICULAR PLUM.
I AM OFFERING YOU AMERICA, GENTLEMEN, ON A SILVER PLATTER--AND I ASK RATHER LITTLE IN RETURN!
WHEN THE GLORIOUS JAPANESE EMPIRE CONQUERS NORTH AMERICA, I DESIRE CONTROL OF TEXAS AND MEXICO--COMPLETE AND ABSOLUTE CONTROL!
I'VE ALWAYS RATHER FANCIED MYSELF A LAND BARON--AND CONSIDERING WHAT YOU'LL BE GETTING, THAT REALLY ISN'T VERY MUCH AT ALL!
ANOTHER WORLD WAR? THEY'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
BUT, GOING ON THE ASSUMPTION THEY'RE NOT KIDDING--AND, GOD HELP ME, I DON'T THINK THEY ARE--
--I'D BETTER DO SOMETHING--AND FAST!
THE EMPEROR IS MOST PLEASED TO ACCEPT YOUR GRACIOUS OFFER, EINHORN-SAN. IT IS GENEROUS INDEED.
SPLENDID! SPLENDID! A TOAST, THEN--TO THE SECOND WAR TO END ALL WARS!
THE ONLY QUESTION IS--WHAT?
ACCORDING TO THE MAP, THIS BLASTED FORTRESS IS...
THE MA
Y'KNOW--IT JUST MIGHT WORK!

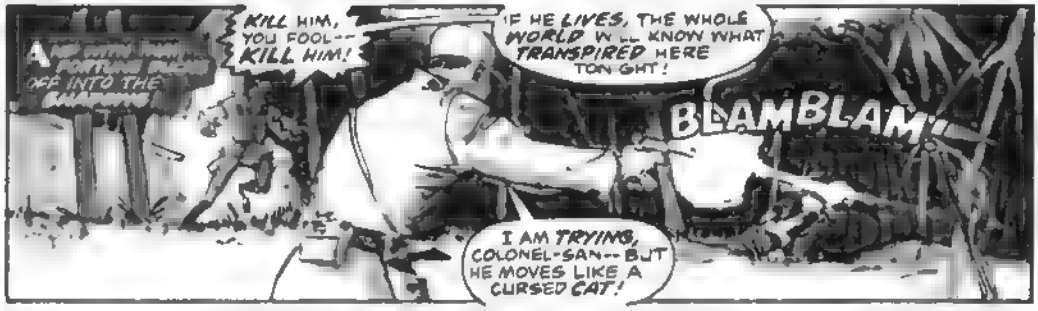
MUST BE MY LUCKY NIGHT! THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED!
A SHAME IT DOESN'T FALE THE OTHER WAY
I'LL HATE MYSELF IN THE MORNING FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO TO THESE BEAUTIFUL BABIES--
--BUT THAT'S SHOW BIZ!
NOW, IF I CAN MANAGE TO CROSS THESE IGNITION WIRES...
BRRMM BRRMM
THAT'S IT!
OKAY, HERE COMES THE FUN PART! I REV THE ENGINE... FLOOR THE GAS...
"--THEY'RE GONNA HEAR IT FROM HERE TO HONG
BWA-RRAAMM!
KROOM!
.. AND TAKE A FAST POWDER!
BETTER HUG THE DECK-- AND CLOSE--
--'CAUSE WHEN THAT CORD CONNECTS WITH THAT MINEFIELD--


EH? WH-WHAT IS THE DISTURBANCE?
THE LANDMINES--! I WARNED YOUR MEN NOT TO GO [illegible]...
LISTEN! A SECOND EXPLOSION--! WE HAD BEST INVESTIGATE THIS, ENHORN-SAN--

NO! MY AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION--!
FORGET YOUR PRECIOUS COLLECTION, ENHORN-SAN! THERE IS AN INTRUDER SOMEWHERE ON THE GROUNDS!
SHIMURA, TAKE ENHORN-SAN BACK INSIDE-- AND PROTECT HIM!
THE REST OF YOU-- FOLLOW ME!

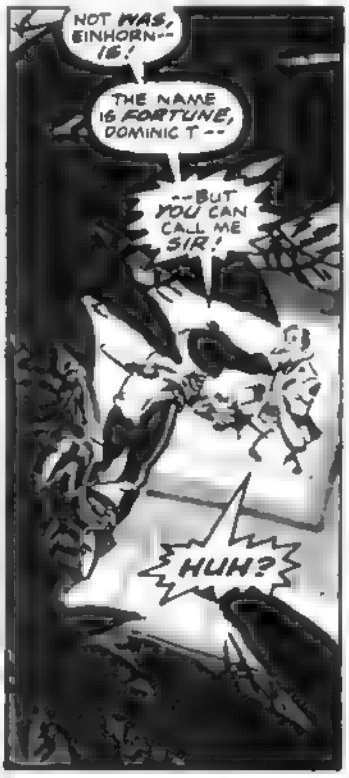
LIKE HOUNDS AFTER A FOX, THE JAPANESE RACE ACROSS THE SPRAWLING GROUNDS OF SKYCLIFF...
THE ONE WE SEEN CANNOT HAVE GOTTEN FAR!
IF YOU VALUE YOUR FREEDOM--KEEP ALERT!

...WHILE THEIR DARK-CLAD QUARRY MOVES SILENTLY AMID THE FUEL DRUMS STANDING BESIDE THE CONCEALED AIRCRAFT.
IT IS LESS THAN A MINUTE BEFORE HE IS SEEN!
QUICKLY--OVER HERE!
I HAVE FOUND HIM!
YOU COULD'VE TAKEN YOUR TIME, Y'KNOW


A MAN WITH HIS FORTUNE RUNS OFF INTO THE DARKNESS
KILL HIM, YOU FOOL--KILL HIM!
IF HE LIVES, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL KNOW WHAT TRANSPIRED HERE TONIGHT!
BLAMBLAM!
I AM TRYING, COLONEL-SAN--BUT HE MOVES LIKE A CURSED CAT!

BAH! WE MAY NEVER CATCH HIM NOW!
READY THE [illegible]! THE EXPLOSIONS ALONE WILL DRAW THE AUTHORITIES--
--AND WE MUST NOT BE HERE TO FACE EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS WHEN THEY ARRIVE!
BUT WHAT OF EINHORN-SAN?

UNFORTUNATELY, EINHORN-SAN WILL HAVE TO SEND FOR HIMSELF!
WELL, THERE HE IS--THE BIG POWER BROKER HIMSELF!
SEEMS THE SHOOTING HAS STOPPED! YOUR COMRADES MUST HAVE FINISHED THE INTRUDER, SHIMURA--WHOEVER HE WAS!


NOT WAS, EINHORN--IS!
THE NAME IS FORTUNE, DOMINIC T--
--BUT YOU CAN CALL ME SIR!
HUH?

IT'S THE ONE YOUR FRIENDS ARE AFTER! SHOOT HIM, SHIMURA--NOW!
THRASH
DUMB IDEA, EINHORN! THAT JUST COST YOU A BODYGUARD!
BWAM!

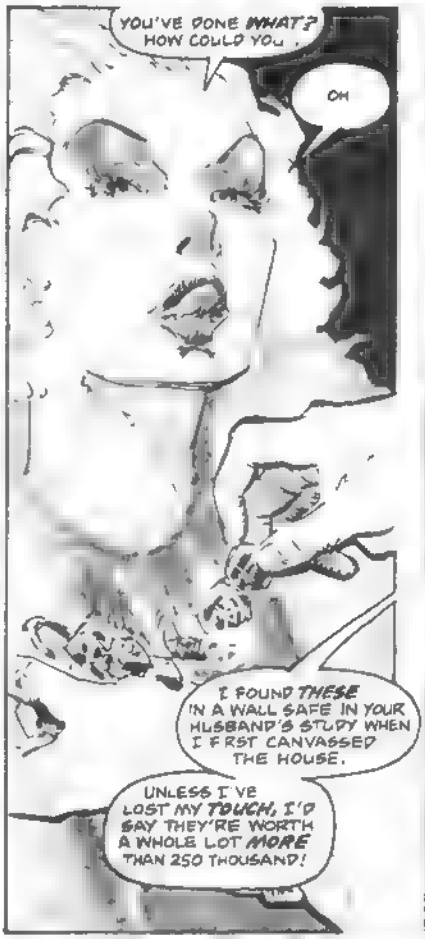
OKAY, MISTER EINHORN--LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!
UP TO THE ROOF--NOW!
Y-YOU'RE INSANE, FORTUNE! YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS!
YOU WANT TO TALK, EINHORN--TALK WHILE YOU WALK!
ATOP THE MANSION, MOMENTS LATER...
THERE'S MY GAL SABBATH--RIGHT ON SCHEDULE!
FORTUNE--PLEASE--DON'T DO THIS TO ME! I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING--!
I CAN MAKE YOU RICH--WEALTHY BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS--!
I'M ALREADY GETTING PAID FOR THIS, EINHORN--AND I NEVER WELCH ON A CONTRACT!
NOW TURN AROUND--AND KEEP THOSE HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM!
YOU AND I ARE GO NG FOR A LITTLE RIDE!
NO! Y-YOU CAN'T--!
NOOOOOOO
WANNA BET?
YOU KEEP SCREAMING LIKE THAT, EINHORN--AND I'M JUST LIABLE TO LOSE MY GRIP ON YOU!
COLONEL ITO--COME QUICKLY! THE AIRCRAFT IS READY AS YOU ORDERED!
WE ARE PREPARED TO TAKE OFF WHENEVER YOU COMMAND!
JUST A MOMENT, MISHUMI--THERE IS SOMETH NG I 6T LL MUST TAKE CARE OF!
DON'T PRESS ME.
Y-YOU WOULDN'T--! Y-YOU COULDN'T--!
OUR SUPERIORS WOULD BE MOST DISPLEASED IF WE WERE TO LEAVE ANY LOOSE ENDS DANGLING BEHIND US--

"--AND THE HONORABLE EINHORN-SAN HAS MOST DEFINITELY BECOME A LOOSE END!"
SPRAK!
EINHORN!
GOD, HIS "PARTNERS" JUST BLEW HIM AWAY LIKE A PIECE OF SCRAP PAPER!
EINHORN'S DEAD WEIGHT WON'T DO ME ANY GOOD NOW!
IF I'M GOING TO KEEP THOSE SONS OF THE RISING SUN FROM TURNING ME INTO COLD MEAT--
ON THE GUN IN MY GRUBBY LITTLE HAND--
--AND THE EXPLOSIVE
SPLANG!
SPLANG!
SPLANG!
SPLANG!
FWA-DA-DA DOOMM!
WHO SAYS IT NEVER PAYS TO PUT SOMETHING AWAY FOR A RAINY DAY?
IT IS A FULL FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE LAST SMOLDERING FRAGMENTS OF WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN THE MANSION CALLED SKYCLIFF PLUNGE INTO THE UNCARING PACIFIC--
--AND BY THEN, DOMINIC FORTUNE IS LONG GONE!

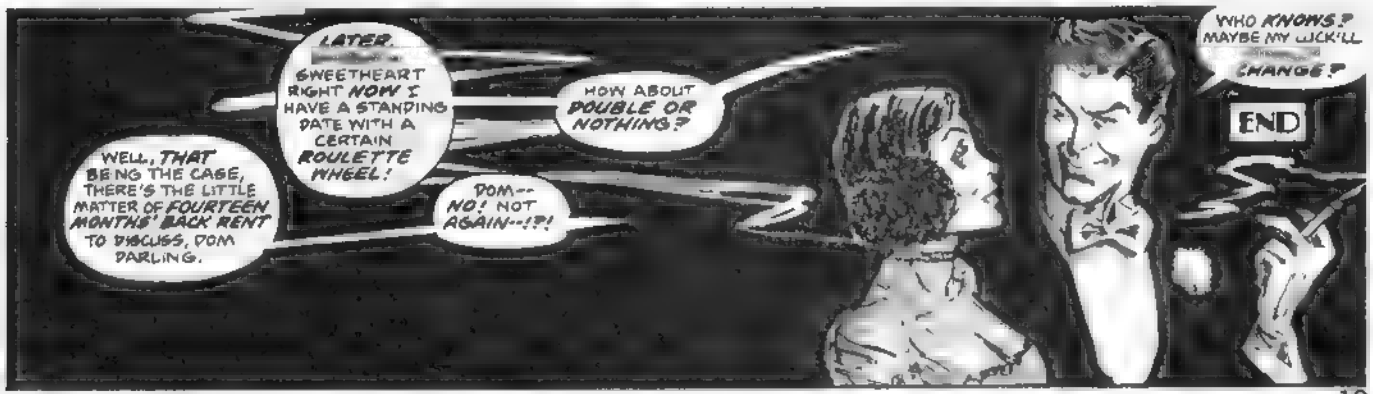
THE AFTERNOON PAPERS REPORTED THE DESTRUCTION OF SKYCLIFF AND THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF JACOB EINHORN IN FAR GREATER DETAIL THAN NECESSARY--
--BUT THEN, EINHORN HAD OWNED ALL THE PAPERS.
INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THERE WAS NO MENTION AT ALL OF DISCOVERING FIVE CHARRED BODIES--OR THE SPLINTERS OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A PLANE.

AN OMMISSION LIKE THAT WOULD HAVE DISTURBED DOMINIC FORTUNE--IF HE'D BOTHERED TO READ THE PAPERS.
DOM DARLING, CORAL EINHORN IS BACK TO...
SLAM!
SO THERE YOU ARE, YOU... YOU... YOU LOUSE, YOU!
AND A GOOD EVENING TO YOU TOO, MRS. EINHORN.
SOMETHING WRONG?

YOU'RE DAMNED RIGHT SOMETHING'S WRONG, WISE GUY!
I HIRED YOU TO KIDNAP MY HUSBAND--NOT SPLATTER HIM ALL OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE!
YOU HIRED ME TO HELP COLLECT THE QUARTER MILLION HE OWED YOU, MRS. EINHORN--
--AND I'VE DONE THAT!


YOU'VE DONE WHAT? HOW COULD YOU...
OH
I FOUND THESE IN A WALL SAFE IN YOUR HUSBAND'S STUDY WHEN I FIRST CANVASSED THE HOUSE.
UNLESS I'VE LOST MY TOUCH, I'D SAY THEY'RE WORTH A WHOLE LOT MORE THAN 250 THOUSAND!

MR FORTUNE, FORGIVE ME! I..
NO NEED FOR APOLOGIES, MRS EINHORN.
AS FAR AS THE POLICE ARE CONCERNED, THE JEWELS ARE A GIFT YOUR EX-HUSBAND GAVE YOU BEFORE YOU--ER--PARTED COMPANY.
THE GEMS ARE YOURS FREE AND CLEAR, MRS. EINHORN--ENJOY THEM!
I'VE ALREADY TAKEN OUT MY TEN PERCENT!


LATER.
SWEETHEART RIGHT NOW I HAVE A STANDING DATE WITH A CERTAIN ROULETTE WHEEL!
HOW ABOUT DOUBLE OR NOTHING?
WELL, THAT BEING THE CASE, THERE'S THE LITTLE MATTER OF FOURTEEN MONTHS' BACK RENT TO DISCUSS, DOM DARLING.
DOM--NO! NOT AGAIN--!?!
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE MY LUCK'LL CHANGE?
END

NOTES ON "THE MESSIAH IN THE SADDLE RESOLUTION"

If you thought "The Power Broker Resolution" was something, then hold on to your hats! Our next fable of Fortune is about as bizarre as you can get without leaving California.

In short, what we have here is a saga of a celluloid cowboy, an up-and-coming religious cult, organized crime, wheeling-dealing Hollywood studios, assaults on Los Angeles, and a machine that moves the earth.

Along the way, there's also a lot of punching and hitting, some wicked gunplay, a couple of hairbreadth escapes, and some funky 1930s aircraft.

Now, assuming that you haven't already gone on to the next page by this point, I should probably mention that Howard Chaykin wrote as well as drew this little escapade... and did a damnably nice job, thank you. Annette Kawecky once again did the honors on the calligraphy.

(And before you ask: Yes, a third DOMINIC FORTUNE story has been drawn by Mr. Chaykin and scripted by David Michelinie. As soon as Terry Austin finds time to ink it, the story will be scheduled for a future issue of MARVEL SPOTLIGHT or MARVEL PREMIERE, our sister showcase comics.)

Well, what are you waiting for? Fortune — and adventure — awaits!

——R.S.

NEVADA--MARCH 3, 1938... THE DESERT SANDS SERVE TO SILENCE THE APPROACH OF A LONE RIDER..
DISMOUNTING BEHIND THE CABIN, THE HORSEMAN CREEPS STEALTHILY TO THE WINDOW, AND..
KLIK
WHA--
BLAM BLAM
THUS DOES NOBLE FLAGG, WESTERN STAR OF THE SILENT SCREEN, MAKE MURDER.
A SHORT GALLOP BRINGS HIM TO A RISE OVERLOOKING THE SHACK, WHERE..
..AFTER SOME FUMBLING...
...HE ACTIVATES THE INNOCENT-LOOKING BLACK BOX
AND, IN HIS HANDS...
...THE DEVICE LOSES ITS INNOCENCE.
FIRST, THE EARTH TREMBLES, TO SHATTER THE CABIN...
KRUMPF!
THEN A FISSURE OPENS, TO SWALLOW ITS MEMORY.
THEN.. SILENCE.
THUS BEGINS A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT WILL ENTANGLE...

Story & Art: HOWARD CHAYKIN AG 104

DOMINIC FORTUNE

IT'S LEN SANDLER, AT APEX PICTURES-- SAYS HE NEEDS YOUR HELP.
SABBATH, YOU CAN SEE HOW BUSY I--
YOU'RE STILL INTO ME FOR FOURTEEN THOUSAND--
HELLO, SANDLER WHAT'S UP?
I'LL BE THERE BEFORE YOU CAN SAY--
NOBLE FLAGG? SURE I'VE HEARD OF HIM. HE'S--
HE'S NUTS, IS WHAT HE IS
OUR NEWSREEL CREW SHOT THIS
"HE'S RETURNED TO SAVE "SIN CITY" FROM THE HAND OF GOD."
NEED!"
ARE ALREADY SACKING HIM UP, AN--
"WHO'S THE GIRL?"
SLAT
"THAT'S ENOUGH"
NOW YOU'RE TALKING
WELL? HARRY, JACK AND SAM ARE IN WITH ME, TOO. MONEY'S NO OBJECT.
I'LL GET STARTED IMMEDIATELY.

NIGHT FALL.. ABOARD THE "MISSISSIPPI QUEEN" BUSINESS IS BRISK...
BUT ON THE UPPER DECK, HER ONLY LIVE-IN CUSTOMER HAS OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND.
'FINANCIAL ADVISOR', MY FOOT. LAST I HEARD, OLGA CIMAGLIA HAD TANK SOSHNICK KILLED, AND MOVED UP TO NUMBER TWO IN THE NEW YORK MOB.
HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW HER?
WELL ENOUGH... I [redacted] TO SAVE MY OWN NECK.
HOW ROMANTIC. WELL, [redacted] ANYTHING TO BE FOUND OUT IN NEW YORK, I'M THE ONE TO DO IT.
LATER, WITH SABBATH ON AN EASTBOUND ELECTRA, FORTUNE, PLAYING A HUNCH, DRIVES TO--
LILY GERMAINE'S, BEFORE SHE BECAME COCAINE DEALER TO THE RICH SHE PLAYED WITH FLAGG...
MAYBE SHE KNOWS SOMETHING,
ONLY ONE CUSTOMER TONIGHT...
BUT UNLESS THERE ARE TWO '34 LINCOLNS WITH CALIFORNIA LICENSE "NOBLE"...
I'VE HIT PAY DIRT!
NOW LILY-- I'VE BEEN VERY PATIENT...
BUT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.
IF YOU DON'T HAND OVER EVERY RECORD OF EVERY DOPE DEAL I'VE BACKED YOU ON...
MICK HERE WILL START HURTING YOU. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THIS TOWN WITH ANY DIRT ON ME AND--
PUNGK
NOT FOR LONG, FLAGG!
FORTUNE! CUT 'M DOWN!

A MOMENT--FROZEN IN TIME--
A MOMENT SHATTERED BY WHITE HEAT!
BLAM!
BLAM
FORTUNE HELL!
HIS NAME IS DAVID FORTUNOV--
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
I USED TO KNOW HIM.
I HAVE MANY REASONS TO FEAR HIM.
'N HE'LL BE DEADER THAN YESTERDAY'S NEWS, OLGA!
C'MON, THEN. WE'LL USE THE MACHINE--
I SHOULD CALL HOMICIDE--
--BUT IF I WANT MY FEE, I'D BEST FIND THOSE RECORDS FIRST.
SUDDENLY--
TINKLE TINKLE
I'VE LIVED IN CALIFORNIA LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW--

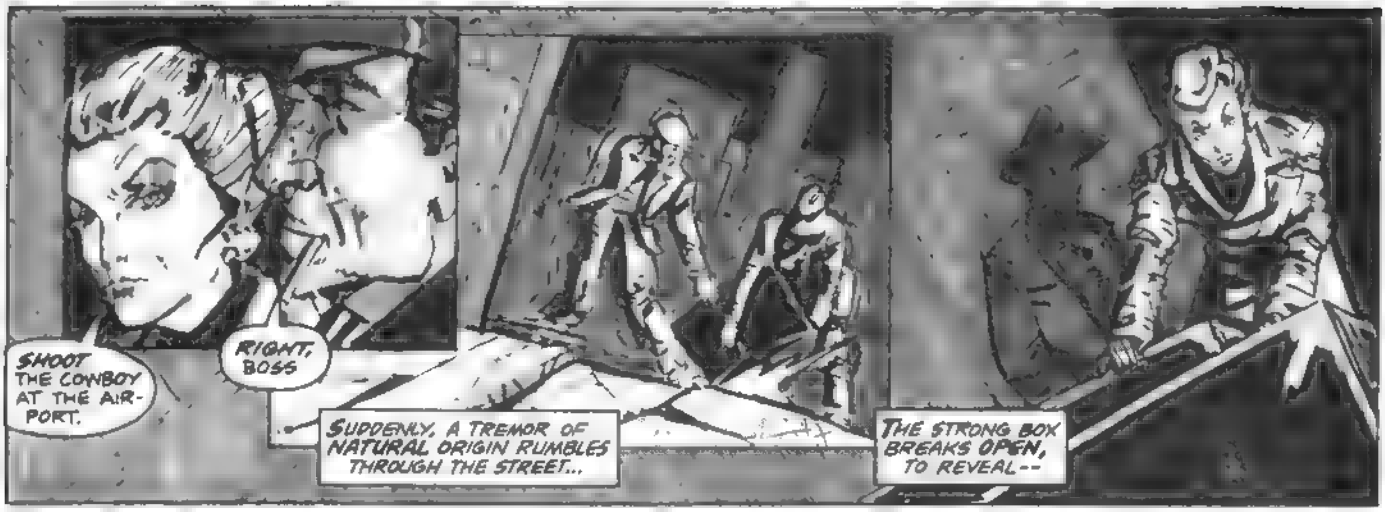
--THAT THOSE SHATTERING GLASSES MEAN ONLY ONE THING--
RUMBLE
KROOMFF
MOMENTS LATER..
DONE LET'S GET BACK TO TOWN
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, AND IT WASN'T "TOO HASTY."
WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE?
I KNOW THIS TOWN, THE LOONIES, THEY'LL BUY ANYTHING.
WE TELL 'EM IT'S THE HAND OF GOD, THEY'LL BUY IT. WE START THE CRUSADE--
--AND THE QUAKES--
TOMORROW.

AND START THEY DO...AS GAMBLING CASINOS
AND TO PUT CONTROL OF LOS ANGELES' UNDERWORLD IN EASTERN HANDS
CAN YOU NOT HEAR THE WAR TRUMPETS OF JEHOVAH? LET US BE THANKFUL, THAT, IN HIS MERCY, THE LORD HAS TAKEN THE WORST OF SINNERS...
GANGSTERS, VICE LORDS, PEDDLERS OF DOPE AND OF FLESH...
VAUNTED NAMES IN THE CORR DORS OF HELL...
OPIUM DENS
MACHILLAC
MAX KOVICK--BILL MAKUTA--LILY GERMAINE
...AND BURLESQUE THEATERS ARE GUTTED BY EARTH QUAKES...
QUAKES THAT SERVE A TWOFOLD PURPOSE
"TO GATHER FOLLOWERS FOR THE CRUSADE"...
JANINE LAPERCH--DOMINIC FORTUNE--THESE HAVE BEEN TAKEN, IN THIS, THE ALMIGHTY'S FINAL CRUSADE!
TURN THAT OFF, WILL YOU VIC?
NOW CARL--YOUR BOYS'LL HIT THE SIERRA NATIONAL--
RING
HELLO?
JUST CALLED TO SAY THAT REPORTS OF MY DEATH HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY EXAGGERATED SEE YA AROUND
KLIK
JACK, I'VE GOT SOMETHING I'D LIKE YOU TO DO...

LATER, ABOARD THE "QUEEN"...
REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE SAID ON THE RADIO, I'M FINE, MR. SANDLER.
YOUR CONCERN FOR MY CONDITION IS VERY FLATTERING, BUT--
IT WAS JUST A FACETIOUS REMARK--
IT MEANS CLEVER...
TUT! SUCH LANGUAGE. I'M EXPECTING A CALL FROM NEW YORK, MR SANDLER. SO, GOOD-BYE.
SHORTLY...
EXCUSE ME, MR FORTUNE. THERE'S A GUY OUTSIDE, SAYS HE WANTS A WORD WITH THE OWNER
SEND HIM IN.
OKAY BUDDY--FREEZE. I JUST DROPPED EVERY DIME I HAD ON YOUR TABLES--AND I'M INTO EVERY BOOKIE IN TOWN, TOO.
I NEED A GETAWAY, TO COOL OFF FOR A WHILE--
SO IF YOU TOSS ME THE KEYS TO YOUR SEA-PLANE--
--SHE STAYS HEALTHY.
NICE OF YOU TO FALL FOR THAT OLDEST--
EVERYBODY I HIT SHOULD BE SO OBLIGING.
'BYE, SUCKER...!
KRAK
HOW DARE YOU HANG UP ON ME, FORTUNE!?! I'LL--HUH?

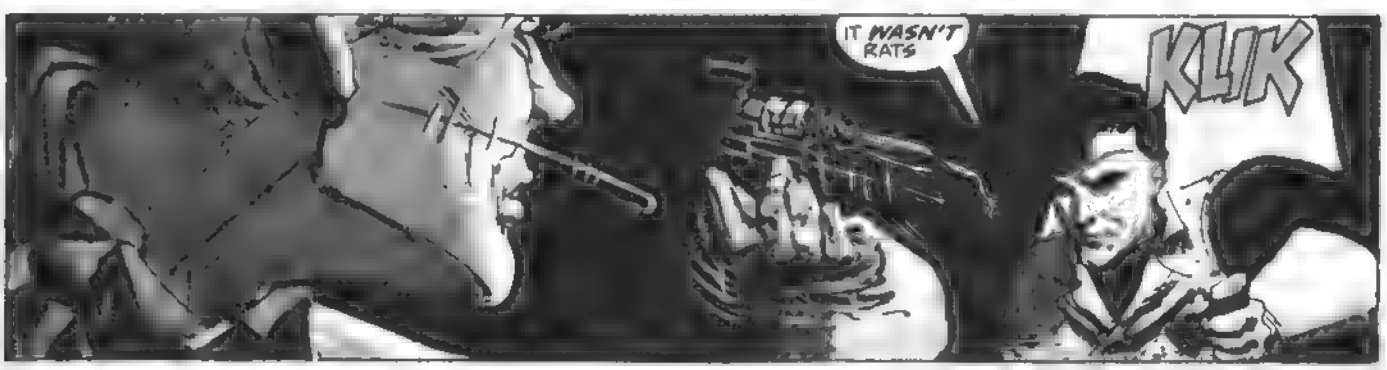
NOBODY...
REPEAT-- NOBODY...
NOBODY PLAYS ME FOR A "SUCKER" AND GETS AWAY WITH IT!
COVER THE MIDDLE-AGED PUNK. I'LL BE W TH YOU SHORTLY.
RING
SABBATH? YES-- HEY, SLOW DOWN--
CAN'T DOM, I'M BEING WATCHED. THIS IS REALLY HOT.
SEEMS FLAGG APPROACHED THE MOB EIGHT MONTHS AGO, W TH SOME BUCK ROGERS STORY ABOUT A RAY GUN TO W PE OUT BUILDINGS.
NO IDEA WHERE HE GOT IT ANYWAY, THEY THREW HIM OUT. BUT OLGA BACKED HIM, OUT OF HER OWN POCKET.
RIGHT, AND FROM THE PROTO-TYPE HE HAD A BIG ONE BUILT.

SHORT DISTANCE FROM RAY CANNON TO EARTHQUAKE MACHINE, I GUESS.
BUT WHY NOT JUST SELL IT TO THE NAZ$? THEY'D LOVE IT.
HER POSITION IN THE HIERARCHY IS SHAKY--
--SO OLGA FIGURED TO UNITE THE L.A. MOB UNDER HER CONTROL, THEN MOVE TO THE TOP BY A SHOW OF FORCE.
AND WHAT BETTER SHOW OF FORCE THAN AN ASSAULT ON THE
OKAY, CHUMP, BALLGAME'S OVER. WHEN ARE THEY PLANNING THE BLITZ?
YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE, FORTUNE, THEY STARTED TWENTY MINUTES AGO.
TOO LATE TO STOP IT, MAYBE, BUT NOT TO CHANGE THE FINISH.
THE "BLITZ" HAS CERTAINLY BEGUN..
AND POLICE, FIREMEN, AND MILITIA ARE KEPT BUSY AS RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS ARE RIPPED APART BY 'QUAKES.
WHILE ACROSS TOWN AN ARMY OF THUGS MAKES SHORT SHRIFT OF L.A.'S BANKS.
WHAT, NOW?
THE CASH IS IN THE CHEST. HAVE IT PUT ON THE FLATBED
WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?
THE STUDIO.
I'VE GOT TO GET THE 'QUAKER. I'LL MEET YOU AT THE AIRFIELD IN AN HOUR.
YOU TWO. GET THIS UP ON THE TRUCK.


SHOOT THE COWBOY AT THE AIR-PORT.
RIGHT, BOSS
SUDDENLY, A TREMOR OF NATURAL ORIGIN RUMBLES THROUGH THE STREET...
THE STRONG BOX BREAKS OPEN, TO REVEAL--

SHREDDED NEWSPAPER! A DOUBLE CROSS! I'LL KILL THE JERK MY-SELF!

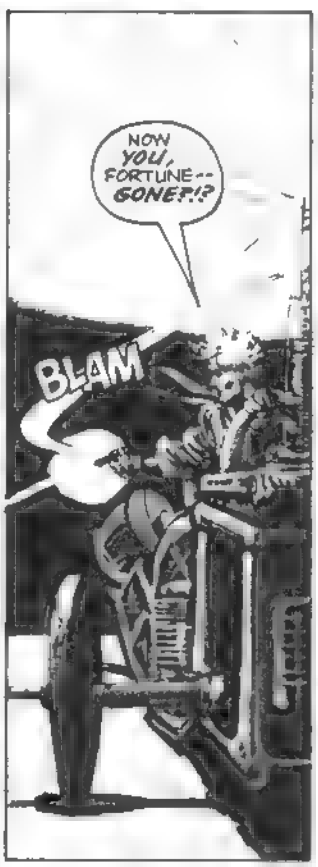
THIS HAS TO BE THE EASIEST TEN MILLION I'VE EVER MADE--
AND WITH MY HANDY LITTLE HELIOCOPTER, I CAN VAMOOSE DOWN TO SOUTH AMERICA
WITH THE MONEY AND THE 'QUAKER, I'LL HAVE MY OWN WORLD POWER OVER NIGHT.
BUT FIRST, A SHOCK WAVE OR TWO TO SLOW DOWN MY COMPADRES.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS THING? MAYBE THE RATS GOT TO THE WIRES...


IT WASN'T RATS
KLIK

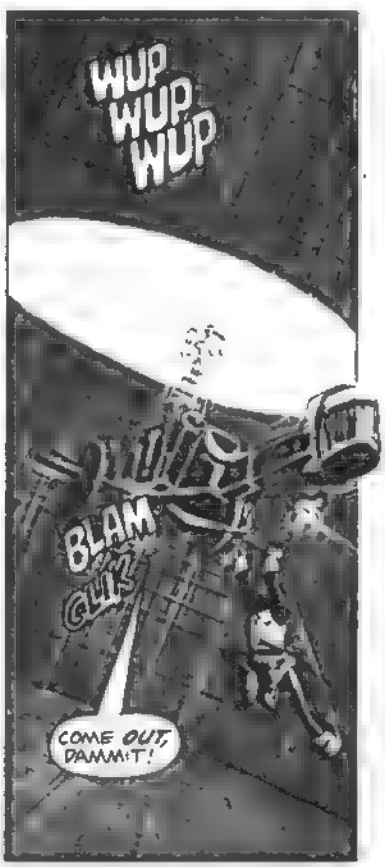
I FIGURED YOU'D NEED PLENTY OF POWER TO OPERATE A MACHINE THAT SIZE.
AND WHAT BETTER PLACE..
OOOOOOFF!
NOT BAD--
..THAN YOUR OWN STUDIO GENERATOR?
--BUT I'VE RISKED TOO MUCH FOR SOME TWO-BIT VIGILANTE TO--
UHHHH
HE'S GOOD..

ALMOST AS GOOD AS I AM.
BUT NOT QUITE.
HA! NOT BAD FOR AN OLD MAN, EH?!?
WUP, WUP, WUP, WUP?
TURN THAT THING OFF, FLAGG, OR YOU'RE A DEAD--

A BLUR OF MOTION, AND OLGA CIMAGLIA IS SILENCED--
KRAK
PERMANENTLY

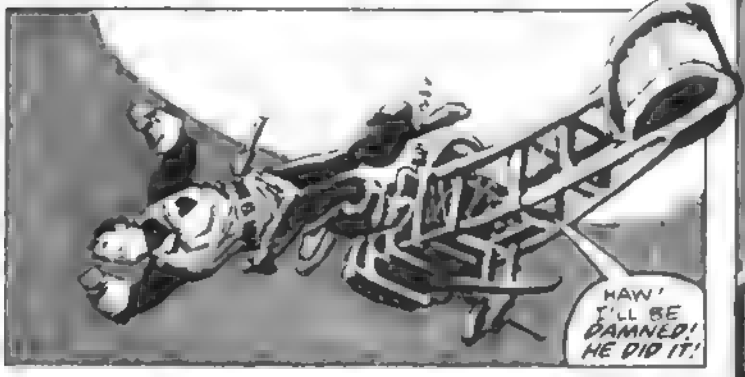

NOW YOU, FORTUNE-- GONE?!?
BLAM

WHERE ARE YOU?!
BLAM BLAM BLAM


WUP WUP WUP
BLAM
CLIK
COME OUT, DAMMIT!

CLIK CLIK
YOU'RE CRAZY, FORTUNE! GIVE IT UP!

GET BACK!


HAW! I'LL BE DAMNED! HE DID IT!

I'VE WON! I'VE BEATEN 'EM ALL!
NOW IT'S THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT AND FREE AS--

OMIGOD-- I FORGOT TO OPEN THE SKYLI--

KA-FOOM

IT'S SEVERAL WEEKS LATER. WITH THE CHAIN OF DISASTERS OVER, LOS ANGELES RETURNS TO NORMAL...WHATEVER THAT MEANS...
AND AT LOS ANGELES AIRFIELD, A REUNION TAKES PLACE.
HI, HONEY BUNCH. YOU'RE A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES.
SPEAKING OF WHICH-- WHAT'S WITH THE CHEATERS?
I WALKED INTO A DOORKNOB
THAT'S A BEAUTY!
IT'S GREAT TO BE HOME--ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU CAN FINALLY PAY THAT FOURTEEN GRAND DEBT
WHAT ABOUT IT?
UH-OH. ABOUT THAT...
WELL, THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BLITZ, I WAS DRINKING WITH HARRY THE HORSE. HARRY BET THE 'QUAKES WOULDN'T WIPE OUT THE CITY...
NATURALLY, I TOOK THE [redacted]T.
NATURALLY.
MOTHER OF GOD--HE BETS AGAINST HIMSELF.
NO, NO-- I KNEW I COULD GET FLAGG, BUT THE QUAKES--I FIGURED--
DOMINIC-- SHUT UP AND DRIVE.

NOTES ON "WAR TOY"

Now we come to a bizarre adventure of a decidedly different nature.

How different?

Well, when was the last time you read a war story wherein the hero of the piece was a robot?

The history of "War Toy" and its pre-publication development is a story in itself. It began back in 1974, when Michael Kaluta sauntered into the office of Editor Emeritus Roy Thomas and announced that he was hot to paint some sort of robot cover for UNKNOWN WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION, our once-upon-a-time S.F. anthology magazine. Well, it just so happened that Roy had had a certain cover idea cooking in the back of his fertile mind for some time... an idea that took the famous Iwo Jima flag-raising scene and substituted a robot for one of the soldiers. So, with a sly smile on his face, Roy gave the basic idea to Mike and sent him on his way. The resultant painting became the cover of UNKNOWN WORLDS #2, a masterful scene that fans still rave about.

Okay, so then Roy had a cover, but no story to go along with it. At this point, Tony Isabella entered the scene — stage right — to bend Roy's ear with ideas for proposed stories about robots. Ever in charge of a situation, Roy presented Tony with the cover scene, a few rough ideas, and a title — "War Toy" — and shooed the wild Italian out of his office. Tony, as is his wont, immediately foresaw a whole series — a future history, if you will — revolving around the theme of Robots at War. Be that as it may, the plot for "War Toy" was shortly in the hands of fledgling artist George Perez — a gentleman who was soon to gain a bit of fame for his own heroic fantasies. And between George's pencils, Tony's words, and the inks of Rico Rival, FM-1... the "War Toy"... came to life on the printed page.

The Robots at War series never materialized, but "War Toy" still stands as a vital, if somewhat troubling statement on humanity and heroism.

Oh, just two more comments before we begin! Betty Curtis, the reporter character in "War Toy", was named for a most charming S.F. writer who also happens to be the mother of pro/fan writer Maggie Thompson. And General Hamilton Arkay's surname is derived from the initials of one Robert Kanigher, a fellow who's been known to write a war story or two in his time.

——R.S.

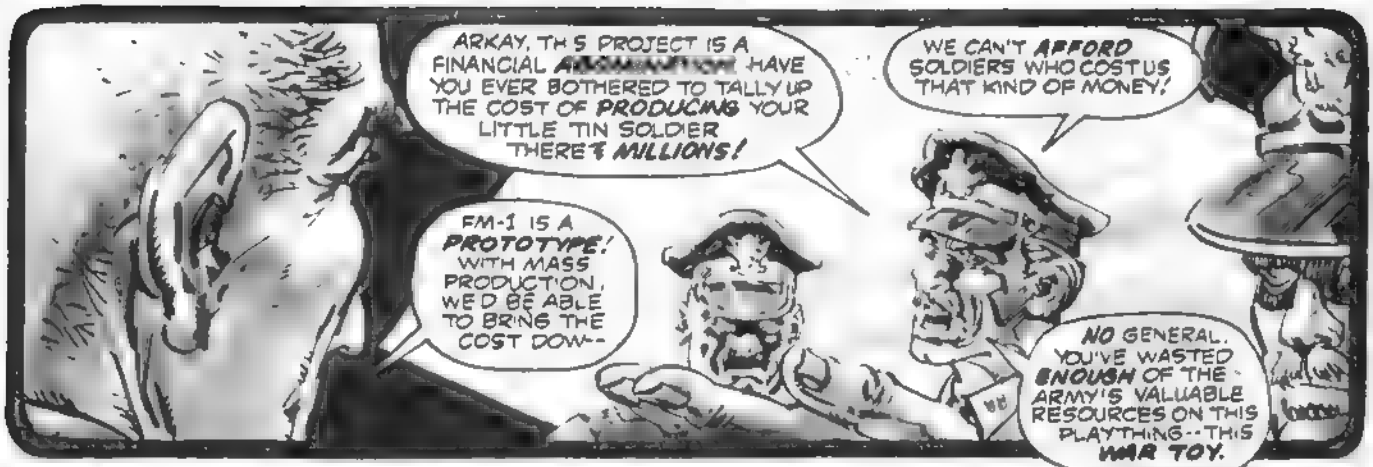
TOMORROW IS BASICALLY TODAY
DOCTOR, IS IT TRUE THAT FM-1--"WAR TOY"--WAS FOUND LYING IN A GUTTER--HIS MECHANISMS NEARLY INOPERATIVE?
MS. CURTIS! I HAVE A PATIENT TO TAKE CARE OF--A MILITARY VETERAN--AND THIS IS THE VETERANS HOSPITAL!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHERE THEY FOUND HIM!
HE NEEDS AID--AND HE'S GOING TO GET IT!
DR. FREEMAN--I THINK HIS INTERNAL "ORGANS" ARE MALFUNCTIONING. HE'S RUNNING DOWN.
HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE FIRST DOCTOR TO OPERATE ON A ROBOT?
MS. CURTIS!
CHRIST! DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS PLACE IS COMING TO--OPERATING ON THIS HUNK OF JUNK LIKE IT WAS A MAN!
TOMORROW

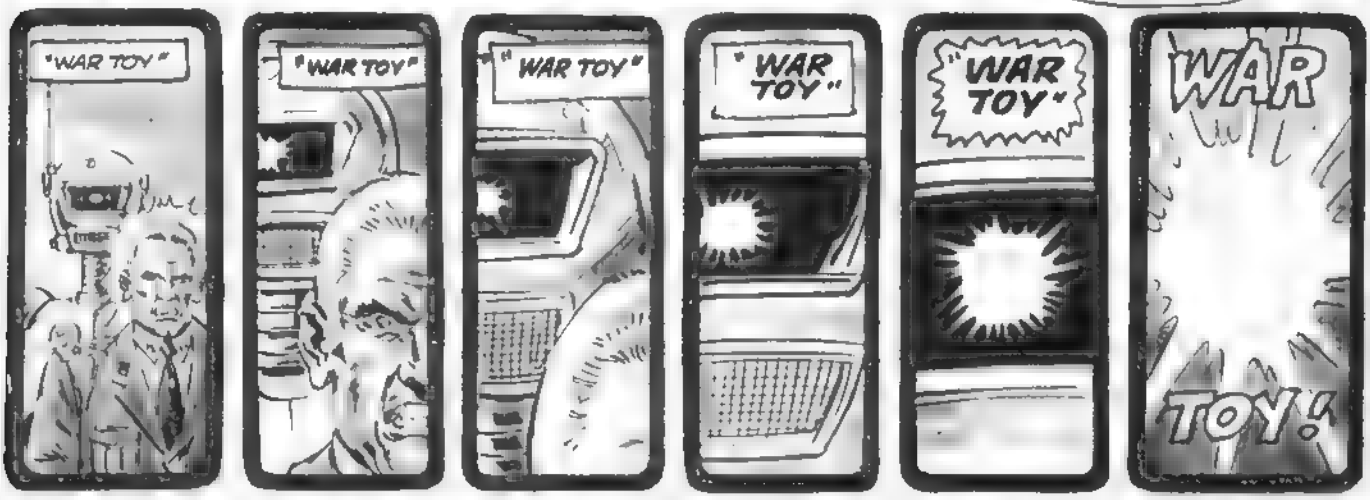
Story: TONY ISABELLA Art: GEORGE PEREZ and RICO RIVAL

I DON'T CARE IF HE'S A MAN, ROBOT, OR REPORTER!
WE'RE GOING TO SAVE HIM!
YOU JUST STAY PUT FOR NOW, YOU'LL GET YOUR LITTLE STORY--
--LATER!
I HAVE A JOB TO DO!
PRESS
MAYBE I CAN--FORGET IT, BETSY THAT GUARD PROBABLY HAS ORDERS TO KEEP THE PRESS OUT OF THE OPERATING CHAMBER
AND THE DAYS WHEN YOU COULD'VE VAMPED YOUR WAY PAST HIM ARE LONG GONE.
GUESS I'LL JUST RELAX--TRY TO ORGANIZE MY THOUGHTS FOR TONIGHT'S BROADCAST.
I SHOULD START WITH FM-1'S "FATHER".
GENERAL HAMILTON ARKAY.
ALL RIGHT, GENERAL--YOUR TOY'S FINISHED.
BUT, ON THE RECORD, I THINK IT'S A MISTAKE!
WE CAN'T TRUST AN INHUMAN SOLDIER WITH INDEPENDENT THOUGHT! THERE SHOULD BE CONTROL DEVICES--LIKE OUR OTHER ATTEMPTS.
YOU MEAN OUR OTHER FAILURES?
THIS ISN'T JUST A MACHINE.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A FIGHTING MAN.

HE'S GOT TO HAVE THE FREEDOM TO MAKE ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENTS AND ACT ACCORDINGLY--LIKE ANY HUMAN SOLDIER.
IF HE DOESN'T, HE'S JUST ANOTHER TANK.
SO, YOUR OBJECTIONS ASIDE GENTLEMEN--
SAY HELLO TO FM-1.
FM-1 WAS BROUGHT INTO THIS WORLD AS A CHILD, BUT HE PROGRESSED RAPIDLY.
WHEN HIS KNOWLEDGE WAS THAT OF EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY, HE WAS "DRAFTED."
THE GENERAL PERSONALLY HANDLED FM-1'S TRAINING.
HIS DREAM WAS TO SPARE COMMANDERS EVERYWHERE THE PAIN OF LOSING MEN IN BATTLE--AND KNOWING THEIR ORDERS HAD LED TO THOSE DEATHS.
REPLACE FRAGILE HUMAN WARRIORS WITH ROBOTS--WHO COULD BE REBUILT, NOT MOURNED, IF THEY FELL IN BATTLE.
HE BEGAN TO THINK OF FM-1 AS... REAL.
THE GENERAL'S CLOSE FRIENDS SAY HE HIMSELF WAS THE RUINATION OF THAT DREAM...
AND THE GENERAL WAS AS PROUD AS ANY FATHER ON THE DAY OF FM-1'S...

--GRADUATION.
A LOT OF FUNDS HAVE BEEN POURED INTO THIS MAD PROJECT OF YOURS, GENERAL ARKAY.
WE'D BETTER GET A GOOD SHOW.
WATCH THE MONITORS, SIR--
--YOU'LL GET YOUR "SHOW"
THIS IS THE MOST DIFFICULT TRAINING COURSE EVER DEVISED, GENTLEMEN. NO MAN HAS EVER COMPLETED IT IN LESS THAN AN HOUR--AND NEVER WITH A PERFECT SCORE.
FM-1...
FORWARD!
SPRANG!
KERSH!
CLUD!
WHOOM!
WAS MY PERFORMANCE ACCEPTABLE, SIR?
ACCEPTABLE? A PERFECT SCORE IN FIFTEEN MINUTES AND YOU ASK IF IT'S ACCEPTABLE!
WELL, SIRS--WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY BOY NOW?
I THINK HE'S GONE MAD --CALLING THAT METAL MONSTROSITY "MY BOY"!
THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE DECISION WE CAN MAKE.


ARKAY, THIS PROJECT IS A FINANCIAL [redacted]! HAVE YOU EVER BOTHERED TO TALLY UP THE COST OF PRODUCING YOUR LITTLE TIN SOLDIER THERE? MILLIONS!
WE CAN'T AFFORD SOLDIERS WHO COST US THAT KIND OF MONEY!
FM-1 IS A PROTOTYPE! WITH MASS PRODUCTION, WE'D BE ABLE TO BRING THE COST DOW--
NO GENERAL. YOU'VE WASTED ENOUGH OF THE ARMY'S VALUABLE RESOURCES ON THIS PLAYTHING--THIS WAR TOY.

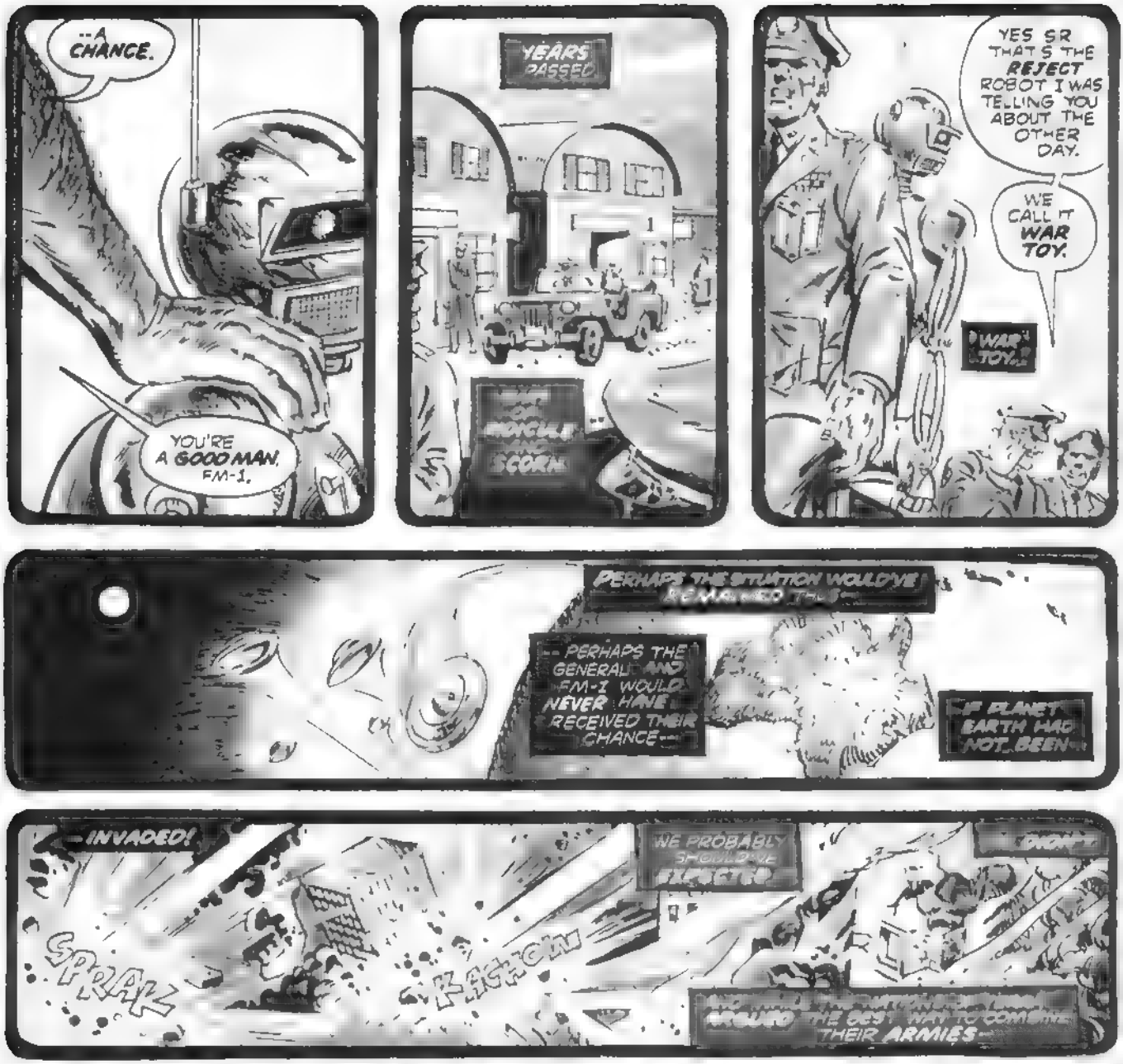


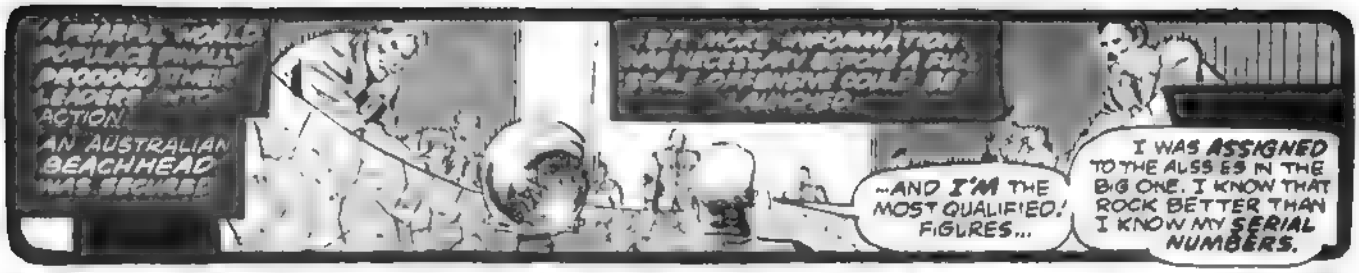
THE TERM MUST HAVE CUT LIKE A SCALPEL. BOTH MAN AND ROBOT WERE CRUSHED BY THOSE DUAL SYLLABLES. THE GENERAL ALLOWED HIMSELF TO [redacted] TRANSFERRED...

...TO SOME MINOR DESK JOB AT SOME BACKWATER POST, DEMANDING ONLY THAT FM-1 BE ASSIGNED TO HIM AS HIS PERSONAL AIDE DE CAMP. THE ARMY AGREED.

WHY PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY TO RID THEMSELVES OF TWO EMBARASSMENTS AT ONCE?
THOSE FOOLS WON'T ALWAYS BE IN CHARGE, LAD. THE ARMY CHANGES WITH THE TIMES--AND WE'RE PART OF THOSE TIMES!
HAMILTON ARKAY NEVER
GENERAL S.R., WHY HAVE YOU TAKEN SUCH AN INTEREST IN ME? EVEN I CAN SEE THAT IT'S HURTING YOUR CAREER.

A STRANGE BOND WAS
YOU'RE PERCEPTIVE, FM-1--FAR MORE THAN EVEN I EXPECTED.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I BROUGHT YOU INTO THE WORLD, SO TO SPEAK.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I THINK YOU

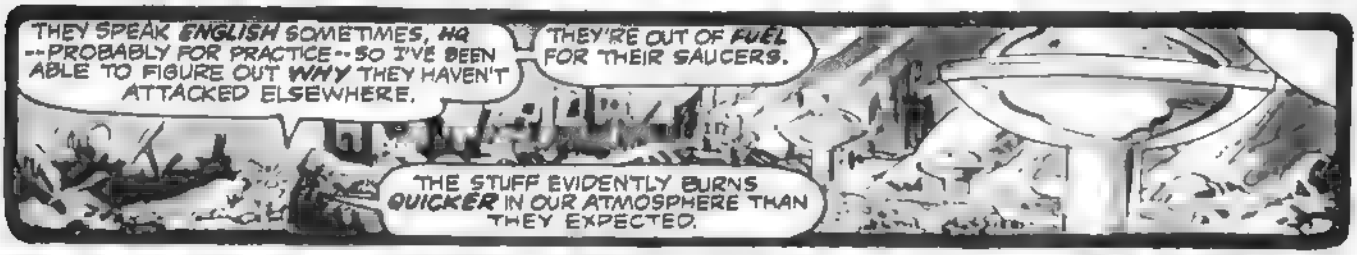

--A CHANCE.
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, FM-1.
YEARS PASSED
YES SR THAT'S THE REJECT ROBOT I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT THE OTHER DAY.
WE CALL IT WAR TOY.
WAR TOY
PERHAPS THE SITUATION WOULD'VE REMAINED THUS--
-- PERHAPS THE GENERAL AND FM-1 WOULD NEVER HAVE RECEIVED THEIR CHANCE--
--IF PLANET EARTH HAD NOT BEEN--
INVADED!
SPRAK
KAGEON
WE PROBABLY SHOULD'VE EJECTED
THEIR ARMIES--
DAILY BUGLE
ALIEN ATTACK
IN AUSTRALIA
UN CALLS EMERGENCY
WORLD THREAT IMMINE
THE MINDEST CONQUERED SOUTHWEST
MILLIONS SAW THE DESTRUCTION OF SYDNEY ON THE SAME SETS--
-- THAT HAD SHOWN THEM ARMSTRONG'S FIRST SMALL STEPS ON THE SURFACE OF THE MOON.

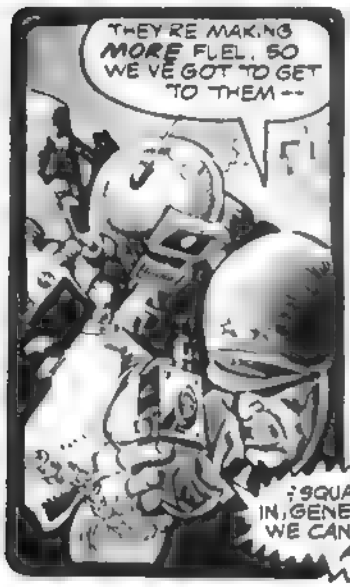

A PEARL HARBOR COULD POSSIBLY PRODDED THEIR LEADERS INTO ACTION!
AN AUSTRALIAN BEACHHEAD WAS SECURED!
BUT MORE INFORMATION WAS NECESSARY BEFORE A FULL SCALE OFFENSIVE COULD BE LAUNCHED.
--AND I'M THE MOST QUALIFIED! FIGURES...
I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE ASSESS IN THE BIG ONE. I KNOW THAT ROCK BETTER THAN I KNOW MY SERIAL NUMBERS.

OKAY I'LL DO IT.
BUT FM-1 ACCOMPANIES ME.
IF YOU FOOLS HADN'T EIGHTY-SIXED MY PROJECT, WE'D HAVE A WHOLE ARMY OF ROBOTS NOW TO FIGHT THE ALIENS.

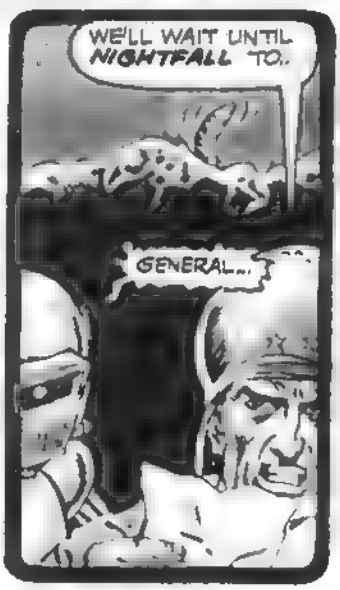
THIS IS NO PLACE TO DEBATE THE WISDOM OF AN OLD DECISION, ARKAY. IF IT'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY--
TAKE YOUR "WAR TOY" WITH YOU!

WAR TOY
WAR TOY
GEN

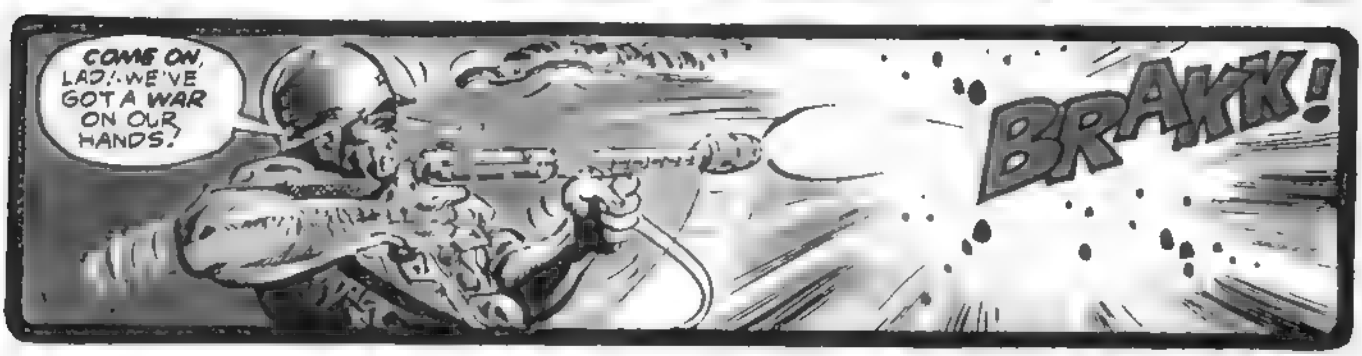

THEY SPEAK ENGLISH SOMETIMES, HQ --PROBABLY FOR PRACTICE-- SO I'VE BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHY THEY HAVEN'T ATTACKED ELSEWHERE.
THEY'RE OUT OF FUEL FOR THEIR SAUCERS.
THE STUFF EVIDENTLY BURNS QUICKER IN OUR ATMOSPHERE THAN THEY EXPECTED.


THEY'RE MAKING MORE FUEL, SO WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THEM--

BLAST! WE'LL HAVE TO CARRY THIS INFO BACK OURSELVES.
;SQUAWK! COME IN, GENERAL; SQUALL; WE CAN'T; ERK! YOU AT ALL--


WE'LL WAIT UNTIL NIGHTFALL TO..
GENERAL...

--BEHIND US!
THE ALIENS!

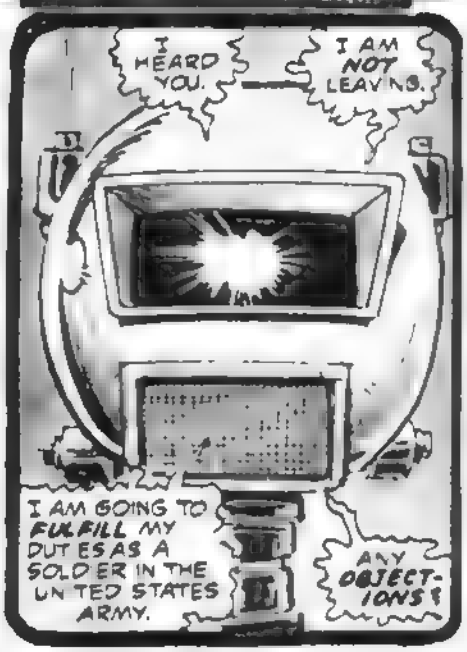

COME ON, LAD! WE'VE GOT A WAR ON OUR HANDS!
BRAKK!

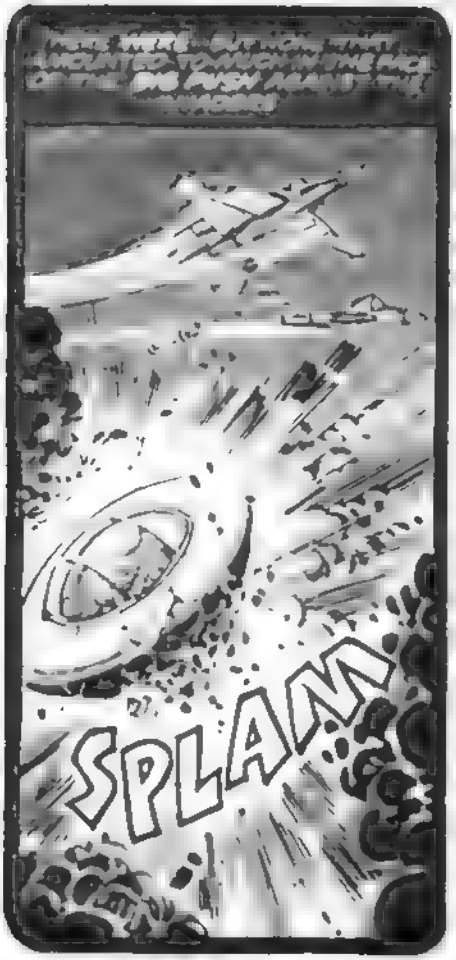
BRUNT!
FRAK!
HUHHNH!
KRAB ACK KK
SPLAMM!
GENERA...
I'M DONE FOR...!
GET IT TO OUR BOYS!
THE... INFORMATION...
GET T TO OUR.. BOYS!
UNNNNN.
WHUDD!
BEACHHEAD

SISTANCE MOVEMENT BATTLING THE ALIENS!
THERE WAS NO SUCH MOVEMENT
ONLY THE SOLDIER DESIGNATED FM-1
BWAM! BWAM! BWAM!
FOLLOWING HIS COMMANDING OFFICER'S FINAL ORDER..

THAT'S IT! THE OPENING WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!
WE'RE GOING TO HIT THEM WITH THEIR GAS TANKS DOWN!

AWRIGHT, "WAR TOY." YA BROUGHT BACK THE INFO-- NOW WHY DONTCHA HEAD FOR THE MOTOR POOL WIT THE REST OF THE JEEPS.
YOU HEARD ME! BEAT IT!

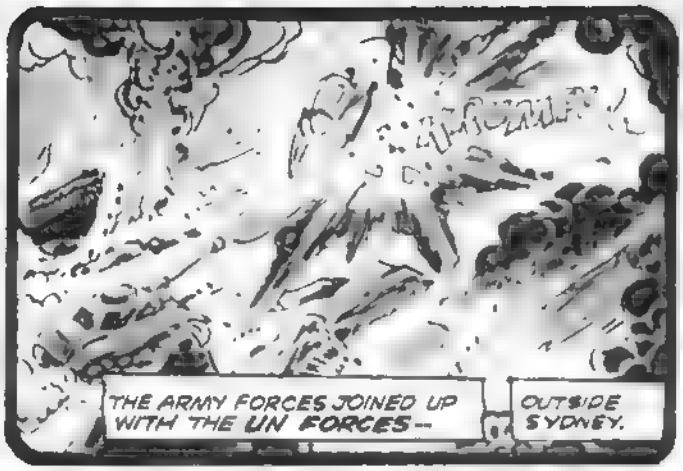

I HEARD YOU.
I AM NOT LEAVING.
I AM GOING TO FULFILL MY DUTIES AS A SOLDIER IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY.
ANY OBJECTIONS?


SPLAM

THAT WERE UNDENIABLE

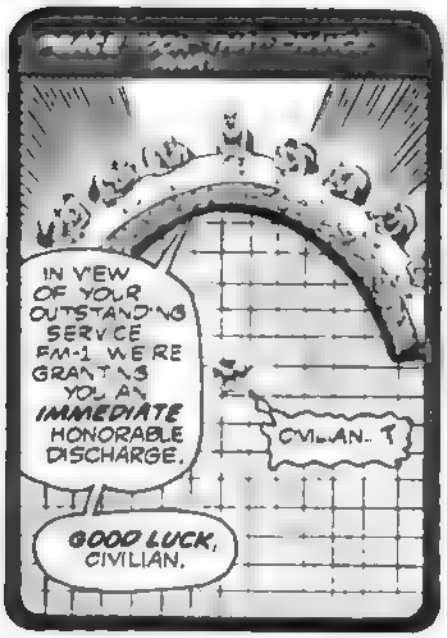
FM-1 PROVED HIS WORTH AS A SOLDIER..
SLAT!
AND A SAVER OF LIVES!

THE WAR WITH THE ALIENS LASTED EIGHTY-SEVEN DAYS.

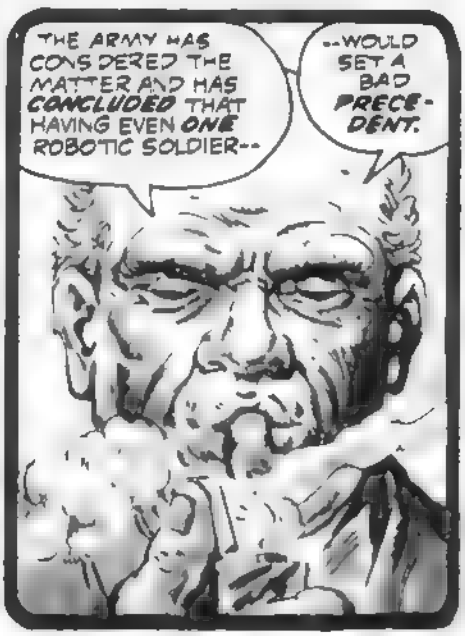

THE ARMY FORCES JOINED UP WITH THE UN FORCES--
OUTSIDE SYDNEY.

FM-1 LED A SQUAD TO THE INVADERS' FUEL RESERVES.
THE RESERVES WERE DESTROYED.

FINALLY ON THE RUBBLE THAT WAS ONCE DOWN-TOWN SYDNEY, THE UNITED NATIONS FLAG WAS RAISED IN VICTORY.
FM-1 WAS THERE.
WAR HAD GIVEN HIM HIS CHANCE

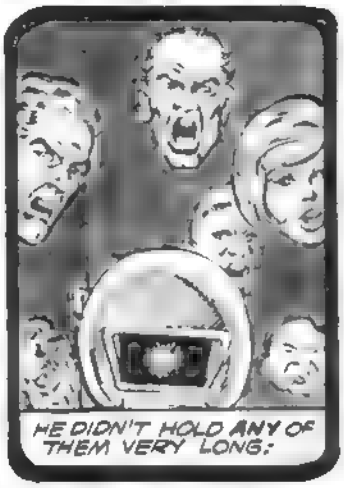

IN VIEW OF YOUR OUTSTANDING SERVICE FM-1 WE'RE GRANTING YOU AN IMMEDIATE HONORABLE DISCHARGE.
CIVILIAN.?
GOOD LUCK, CIVILIAN.

SIR, I'VE ONLY BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR MILITARY SERVICE.
WHERE DO I GO TO RE-ENLIST?
YOU DON'T.


THE ARMY HAS CONSIDERED THE MATTER AND HAS CONCLUDED THAT HAVING EVEN ONE ROBOTIC SOLDIER--
--WOULD SET A BAD PRECEDENT.

THERE WERE NO MEDALS FOR FM-1! HE'D EXPECTED THAT!
AFTER A BATTLE YOU DON'T DECORATE A TANK.
BUT HE HADN'T EXPECTED TO BE THROWN OUT ON THE ARM!
EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
AND INTO THE LESS THAN TENDER ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE JOB POOL.

HIS TRAINING QUALIFIED HIM FOR--
SEVERAL GOOD POSITIONS!

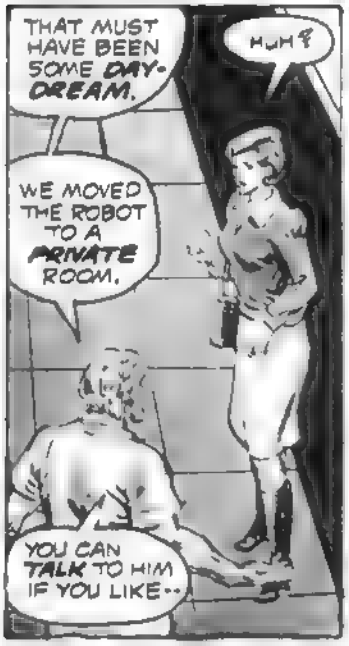

HE DIDN'T HOLD ANY OF THEM VERY LONG.

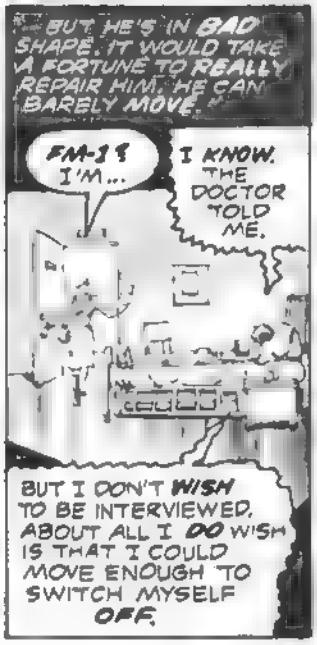
HIS PARTS STARTED WEARING DOWN.
MALFUNCTIONED OCCASIONALLY

THE JOBS HE COULD HOLD--
--DIDN'T PAY ENOUGH FOR HIM TO REPLACE THOSE PARTS.

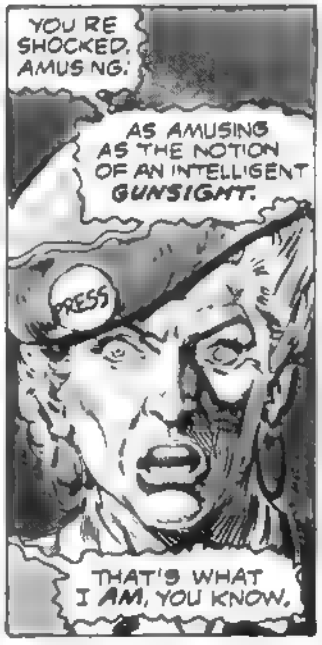
IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT HE "BREAK DOWN!"
HE WOULD HAVE "DIED" IN THAT GUTTER-- EXCEPT FOR THE CHANCE PASSAGE OF AN AMBULANCE FROM THE V.A. HOSPITAL...
...AND A COMPASSIONATE PARAMEDIC WHO DECIDED THAT, ROBOT OR NOT, FM-1 WAS GOING TO RECEIVE...

TIME FOR CARE DUE A DECENT AMERICAN SOLDIER IN THE NATION'S SERVICE.


THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME DAY-DREAM.
HUH?
WE MOVED THE ROBOT TO A PRIVATE ROOM.
YOU CAN TALK TO HIM IF YOU LIKE--


BUT HE'S IN BAD SHAPE. IT WOULD TAKE A FORTUNE TO REALLY REPAIR HIM. HE CAN BARELY MOVE.
FM-1? I'M...
I KNOW. THE DOCTOR TOLD ME.
BUT I DON'T WISH TO BE INTERVIEWED. ABOUT ALL I DO WISH IS THAT I COULD MOVE ENOUGH TO SWITCH MYSELF OFF.

SWITCH YOURSELF... THAT'S..
SUICIDE?
PERHAPS.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D ASSIST ME. I'LL TELL YOU WHERE THE SWITCH IS.


YOU'RE SHOCKED. AMUSING.
AS AMUSING AS THE NOTION OF AN INTELLIGENT GUNSIGHT.
PRESS
THAT'S WHAT I AM, YOU KNOW.

NO, YOU'RE NOT! YOU'RE A VETERAN OF OUR ARMY!
AND ONCE I GO ON THE AIR WITH YOUR STORY--
--YOU'LL GET THE MONEY NEEDED FOR YOUR REPAIRS, FM-1. YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT!
I DON'T WANT TO BE A CAUSE...
I WANTED TO BE A SOLDIER
THEY MADE ME A "WAR TOY."
SMASH
OH MY GOD!
TOMORROW! IT'S NOT VERY DIFFERENT FROM TODAY.
BETSY! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
WHAT'S UP?
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD?
THE ALIENS HAVE INVADED AGAIN!
HEY WHAT'S THE MATTER?
NOTH NG..
I'LL BE OKAY IN A SECOND.
HAVE THE COPY BOYS BRING ME THE TELE-TYPE COPY. I'LL START WORKING ON TON GHT'S BROADCAST.
TOMORROW.
YOU'D THINK WE COULD HANDLE IT.
FIN

NOTES ON "GOOD LORD"

Look out, people! Here comes the weird part!

Longtime comics fans will instantly recognize "Good Lord!" as a loving homage to the great old science fiction comics of the 1950s — particularly those produced by Messrs. Gaines, Wood, Feldstein, and Williamson (the Bill, Wally, and two Al's of the story's dedication) for the late, much-lamented E.C. comics line.

Like those weird S.F. stories of yesteryear, it features a lot of grotesque bug-eyed monsters, strong self-righteous spacemen, and exotic alien cities. It also has a Marv Wolfman twist ending that just might take you by surprise. And, of course, it sports some mighty fine art by Dave Cockrum and the Crusty Bunkers.

A word here about the Bunkers: If you've ever seen their name in the credits of a story and wondered just who in blazes they were... well, there's no easy answer. The Crusty Bunkers was a polite euphemism for the inhabitants of New York's famed Continuity Associates studio who would occasionally team-ink a comics story. Naturally, as various people drifted in and out of the studio, the make up of the Bunkers would change from job to job. However, through the miracle of total recall, we've been able to determine that on this particular story, the Crusty Bunkers consisted of Neal Adams, Terry Austin, Pat Broderick, Russ Heath, and Josef Rubinstein.

And now, representing the dark side of heroism, here is "Good Lord!"

Choke.

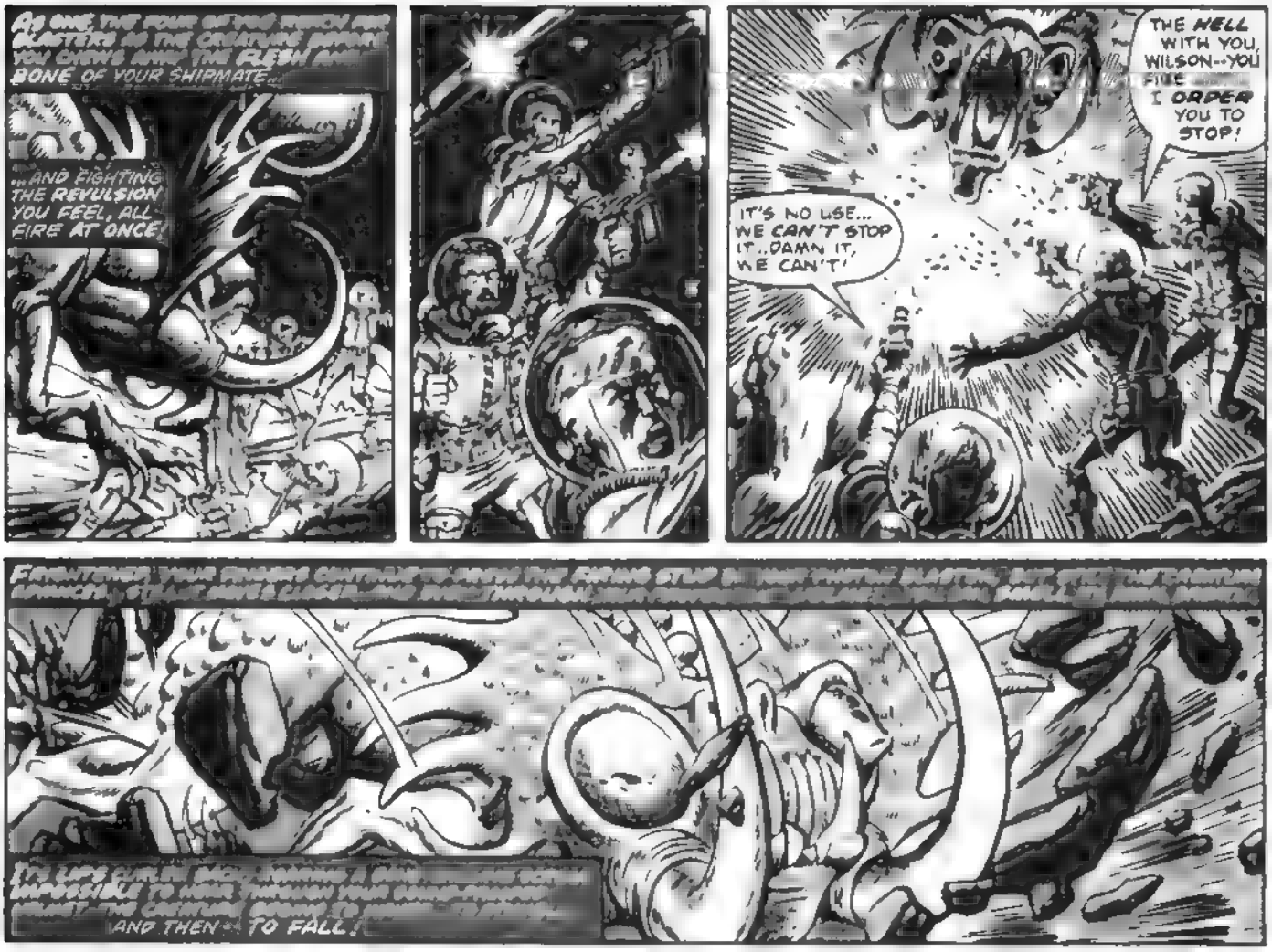
——R.S.

GOOD LORD!

"Good Lord!" is cheerfully dedicated to Bill Watty and a couple of Al's-- for a whole bunch of great hours of reading. Thanks, fellas.

BOB! BOB! I TWISTED MY ANKLE ...CAN'T RUN! HELP ME... GOD, HELP ME!
CAN'T TAKE THE TIME, COLIN--THOUGH I WISH TO THE GOOD LORD I COULD!
BUT IF I SAVED YOU, THERE'S NO ASSURANCE I'D MAKE IT.
SO LONG, BUDDY...

Script: MARV WOLFMAN ; Art: DAVE COCKRUM and [illegible]


AS ONE, THE FOUR OF THE MISSION AND CLUTCHING AT THE CRAVING PERSON YOU KNOW AND THE FLESH AND BONE OF YOUR SHIPMATE...
...AND FIGHTING THE REVULSION YOU FEEL, ALL FIRE AT ONCE!
THE HELL WITH YOU, WILSON--YOU FIRE ... I ORDER YOU TO STOP!
IT'S NO USE... WE CAN'T STOP IT..DAMN IT, WE CAN'T!
AND THEN... TO FALL!
PROPER PRAYER OVER HIS GRAVE, AND THEN FILE BACK INTO THE ALUMINOID STAR-SHIP YOU HAVE LIVED IN FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS, INTO THE BLEAK EXPANSE OF ENDLESS SPACE
BLAST! THAT'S FOUR OF US DEAD IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS HOW LONG IS THIS IDIOTIC RESEARCH GOING ON, WILSON?
YOU'RE NOT BEING FAIR, BOB IT ISN'T WILSON'S FAULT THOSE MEN DIED
ISN'T IT, JOAN? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE GOOD DOCTOR'S CRAZY IDEAS GOT US IN THIS STINKING PREDICAMENT IN THE FIRST PLACE?
HE'S THE ONE TRYING TO PROVE THAT ANCIENT CONCEPT THAT THERE ACTUALLY IS A SUPREME BEING... A GOD WHO CREATED EVERY LIVING FIBRE IN THE UNIVERSE
I WON'T ARGUE WITH YOU, KING. YOUR JOB IS TO PILOT THIS SHIP, AND I'VE PAID YOU WELL.

I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO GIVE MY VIEWS, THEN, DOCTOR? WELL, I'VE GOT OPINIONS, AND I'M NOT AFRAID OF EXPRESSING THEM.
IF THERE IS A GOD... IF THERE IS ONE CREATOR, THEN TELL ME, GREAT DOCTOR, WHY THE HELL WOULD HE CREATE A MONSTER LIKE THE ONE WHO KILLED COLIN?
BECAUSE THERE MUST ALWAYS BE PREDATORS, AS THERE MUST ALWAYS BE VICTIMS.
I MERELY STATE THERE IS A GOD--I DON'T SAY THERE IS A JUST ONE.
BOB! DR WILSON-- LOOK AHEAD OF US... AT THAT PLANET.
IT DEFIES ALL DESCRIPTION... ALL POSSIBLE SCIENTIFIC
SENSORS SAY THERE IS NOTHING THERE, YET, LOOK--LOOK! THERE IS A PLANET AHEAD OF US.
GOOD LORD! IT IS THERE... I CAN SEE IT!
BRING IT DOWN SLOWLY, JEFF.
IF IT ISN'T AN ILLUSION, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO LAND.
AS FOR YOU, GOOD DOCTOR, WE'LL RESUME OUR DISCUSSION SOME OTHER TIME.
ATMOSPHERE PERFECT. WE WON'T NEED OUR SUITS, BOB TEMPERATURE IS A NICE WARM EIGHTY-TWO.
THEN THERE'S NOTHING TO KEEP US COOPED-UP IN HERE, IS THERE? LET'S GO, MEN!
IT'S BEAUTIFUL... I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS PLACE BEFORE..
...NEVER SMELLED ANYTHING AS SWEET AS THIS AIR... IT'S LIKE A WARM PERFUME.
IT'S PERFECT... TOO PERFECT. I DON'T LIKE IT
SO HELP ME, IF YOU SAY ONE WORD ABOUT FEMININE INTUITION...!

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, BOB--BUT THERE'S STILL SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PLACE I DON'T LIKE--SOMETHING I CAN'T EXPLAIN
...THE FRESH AIR IS MAKING YOU OXYGEN-DRUNK.
STOP COMPLAINING AND ENJOY.
YOU'VE BEEN COOPED UP IN SPACE TOO LONG WITH GRUMBLERS, JOAN...
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT...
ASTOUNDING! THIS WORLD IS A VIRTUAL PARA--
BOB!!!
GOOD LORD! WHAT'S THAT??
WHO THE HELL CARES, DAMMIT--! JUST BLAST IT! BLAST IT!
NO! DON'T! YOU MUSN'T!
DAMN IT, WILSON--DON'T GET IN MY WAY OR SO HELP ME YOU'LL GET THE NEXT BLAST.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, FOOL...THAT'S A LIFE-FORM...AN INTELLIGENT CREATURE YOU CAN'T--
DON'T DARE TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO, WILSON ...JUST DON'T DARE!
IT'S WORKING! JOAN'S FALLING FREE
GOD! IF SHE'S BEEN HURT--!
THANK THE LORD. I WAS WORRIED FOR A MOMENT.
I-I'M OKAY... LORD, I'M OKAY... I JUST NEED TO REST...
WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU DOING BACK THERE, WILSON?

FORGET IT, CHAMBERS YOU'D NEVER UNDERSTAND.
MORE OF YOUR "DIVINE RIGHT OF MURDER," WILSON?
WELL, FORGET IT. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED IF SOMETHING ATTACKS ME --IT LOSES ITS RIGHT TO LIVE!
HEY! C'MON OVER HERE--TAKE A GANDER OVER THERE!
GOOD LORD! IT'S A CITY!
PRETTY DAMNED ADVANCED, IF I'M ANY JUDGE OF ARCHITECTURE!
JEFF, INFLATE THE RAFT. I WANT A CLOSER LOOK.
IF THERE'S A CITY HERE THAT MEANS THERE MAY BE INTELLIGENT LIFE.
AND IF THERE IS LIFE, I WANT TO MEET 'EM FACE-TO-FACE...
AND BLOW THAT DAMNED GOD THEORY OF YOURS TO BITS, WILSON
THE BIBLE SAYS GOD MADE US IN HIS OWN IMAGE. IF THAT'S TRUE, HE PROBABLY MADE ALL HIS INTELLIGENT CREATIONS THE SAME WAY
WE'LL SOON SEE IF THAT'S THE CASE.
...OR IF IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF EVOLUTION!
GOOD LORD! LOOK!
DIVE, DAMN YOU ALL-- DIVE!
IT'S GOT ME...BOB-- IT'S GOT ME!
HEELLLPPP!!!
HANG ON, BUDDY--HANG ON! MAYBE MY BLASTER WILL FREE YOU AS IT DID JOAN!
IT'S CRUSHING ME...KILLING ME!!!
AAARRGGHHH!!!
OH NO! IT'S RIPPED JEFF APART! NO!
DIE, DAMN YOU! FOR GOD'S SAKE--DIE!
STOP IT, KING! YOU CAN'T MURDER IT! YOU MUSTN'T!
SHOVE IT, WILSON! SHOVE IT RIGHT NOW!

THE LAKE-BED AND ONTO
AND NOT STAIN THE CRYSTAL WATERS WITH ANY OTHER STREAKINGS OF SCARLET.
GONE! DAMN BEAST'S FLED!
SO MUCH FOR YOUR SO-CALLED PARADISE, WILSON.
'CAUSE IF THERE'S ANY PLACE THAT BORDERS ON HELL, THIS HAS GOT TO BE IT
CAN'T WE STOP ARGUING, BOB? IF WE WANT TO SURVIVE, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER.
TELL THAT TO THE MANIAC, JOAN--HE'S THE ONE WHO'S BEEN FIGHTING US--HE'S THE ONE WHOSE HALF-BAKED IDEAS LOST OUR CREW!
LOOK AHEAD OF US, KING--AND WE'LL SEE WHO THE MANIAC REALLY IS!
THE FAR SIDE OF THE LAKE... THIS CASTLE... ARCHWAYS... YARDS...
SANITARY WHITENESS... THE STRANGELY METALLIC... ...ALLS YOU WITH A WARMTH, A SERENITY THAT NO MAN BORN ON EARTH HAS EVER EXPERI...
FIRST TIME IN YOUR ALL-TOO-FLEETING LIFE, YOU STAND HUMBLED BEFORE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL

I-I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE, YET--
WE OUGHT TO SEND OUT A REPORT! BUDY FIRST--LET THE EARTH KNOW WHAT WE FOUND
I AGREE WITH JOAN
GOOD FOR YOU WILSON--NOW TAKE THAT AGREEMENT AND STUFF IT SIDEWAYS.
WE'RE GOING N-- AND THAT MEANS THE THREE OF US--
--EVEN IF I HAVE TO DRAG YOU WITH ME
BUT--!
TOO LATE FOR THAT JOAN WE'RE MOVING N
YOUR FINGERS TOUCH THE WALLS, AND THEY FEEL SOFTNESS. YOU BREATHE THE AIR, AND IT IS SWEET. YOU WALK UPON THE GROUND, AND IT ALMOST LIFTS YOU WITH ITS BUOYANCY.
WE STICK TOGETHER FOR THIS. I WON'T TAKE THE CHANCE OF YOU TWO TAKING OFF.
INDEED THE GREAT CATHEDRAL FILLS YOU WITH THE GLORY OF A
AND BY YOU DO TURN... ALL
AND THE GELATINOUS BLOB-LIKE BEAST ENWRAPS ITSELF
AAARRGGHH!!
JOAN!
OUT OF MY WAY WILSON! I'M GOING TO KILL THAT DAMN BEAST!
IT'S TOO LATE, KING! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO!
EVEN AS YOU STRUGGLE WITH THE MADDENED PILOT TO PREVENT HIS DESTRUCTION OF THE ALIEN BEAST, YOU WONDER FOR THE FIRST TIME IF HE WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG.
OF YOU...
VOMITS THE UNDIGESTABLE BONES OF YOUR LATE SHIPMATE
YOU WOULD THE BONES OF A JUST CONSUMED CHICKEN.
I COULD HAVE SAVED HER TOWN YOU BUT SHE DIED!
BECAUSE OF YOU! ALL BECAUSE OF YOU!!
PROTEST THE UNMERCIFUL BEATING...
BECAUSE, GOD HELP YOU YOU DESERVE IT!
I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET, WILSON-- BUT I WANT YOU TO WATCH ME..
WATCH ME DESTROY THIS GOD-DAMNED BEAST OF YOURS
WATCH ME DESTROY IT JUST THE WAY IT DESTROYED JOAN!

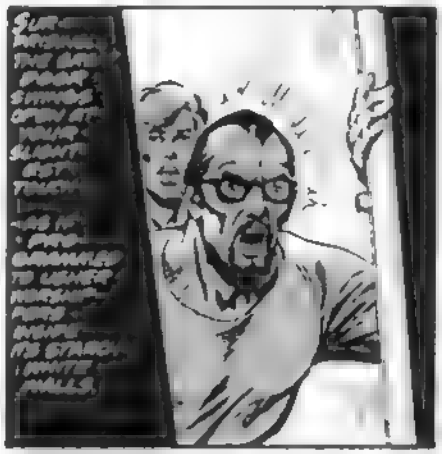
DID YOU SEE THAT, WILSON? DID YOU ENJOY WATCHING ITS FLESH SIZZLE, ITS SKIN BOIL?
DID YOU GET YOUR KICKS WATCHING IT MELT OVER ITSELF?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, WILSON, BUT I DID--DAMN IT--I DID!
'CAUSE SOMEHOW IT'S DEATH-SCREAM MADE UP JUST A BIT FOR THE MANY SCREAMS YOU CAUSED
LISTEN KING - I DON'T THINK I CARE FOR THE WAY--

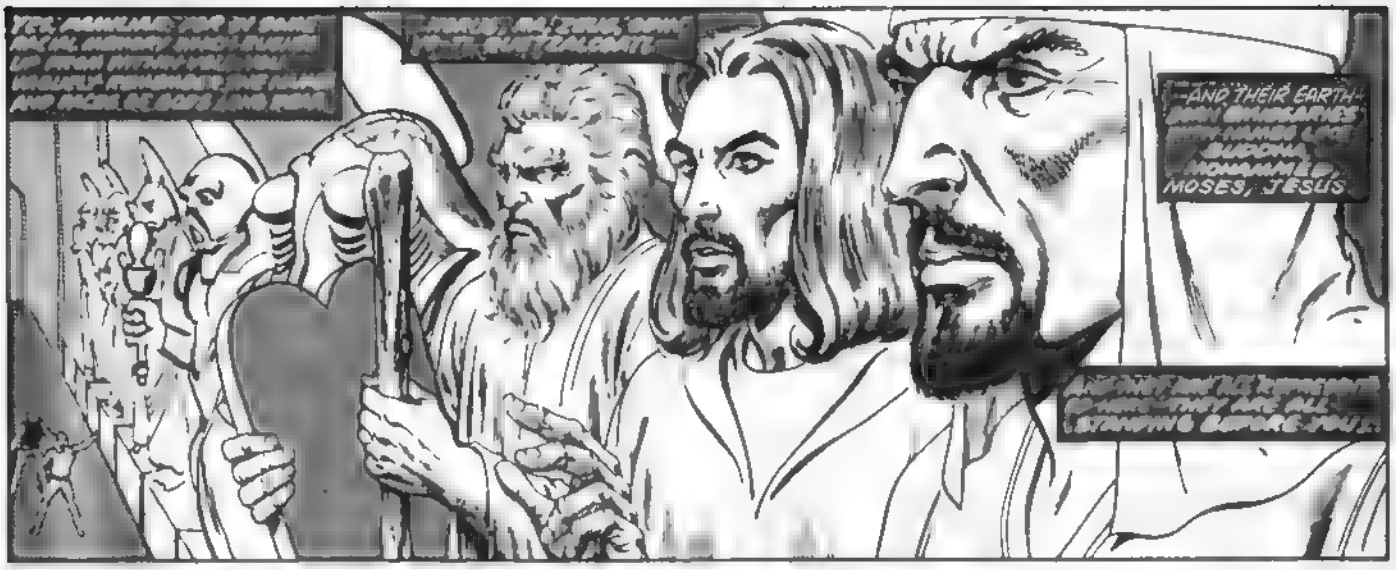
WHO GIVES A FLYING DAMN WHAT YOU THINK OR CARE ABOUT, WILSON? DID YOU CARE ABOUT JEFF OR COLIN, OR-- OR JOAN?
THEY DIED BECAUSE YOU DON'T CARE. NOW WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT YOU?
YOU KNOW SOMETHING WILSON--YOU SICKEN ME! GOD, YOU SICKEN ME!

BECAUSE, EVEN IF YOU ARE RIGHT -- WHAT GOOD
WE'RE GONNA FINISH THIS MISSION NOW, WILSON. JUST SO I CAN RAM MY FIST AND MY GUN DOWN YOUR THROAT WHEN I PROVE YOU WRONG!

I'VE ALREADY CONCEDED, KING. MUST WE GO THROUGH ALL THIS?
MOVE IT, WILSON--INSIDE!
NOT ONLY MUST WE--YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT, WILSON. BELIEVE ME ON THAT!



GOOD LORD! WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
A HALLWAY OR SOME SORT'S--MAYBE THE ENTRANCEWAY TO A MUSEUM.
BUT THESE STATUES--SO INCREDIBLY ALIEN, AND YET--
--FAMILIAR.


--AND THEIR EARTH-
BUDDHA
MOHAMMED
MOSES, JESUS

THEN IT WAS TRUE--ALL OF IT
THEY SAY MOSES'S BODY WAS NEVER FOUND WHEN HE DIED--
--THAT JESUS WOULD RISE FROM HIS GRAVE AND RETURN IN SOME FUTURE YEAR
BUT THEY'RE ALL HERE--ALL OF THEM ALL THESE GODS--

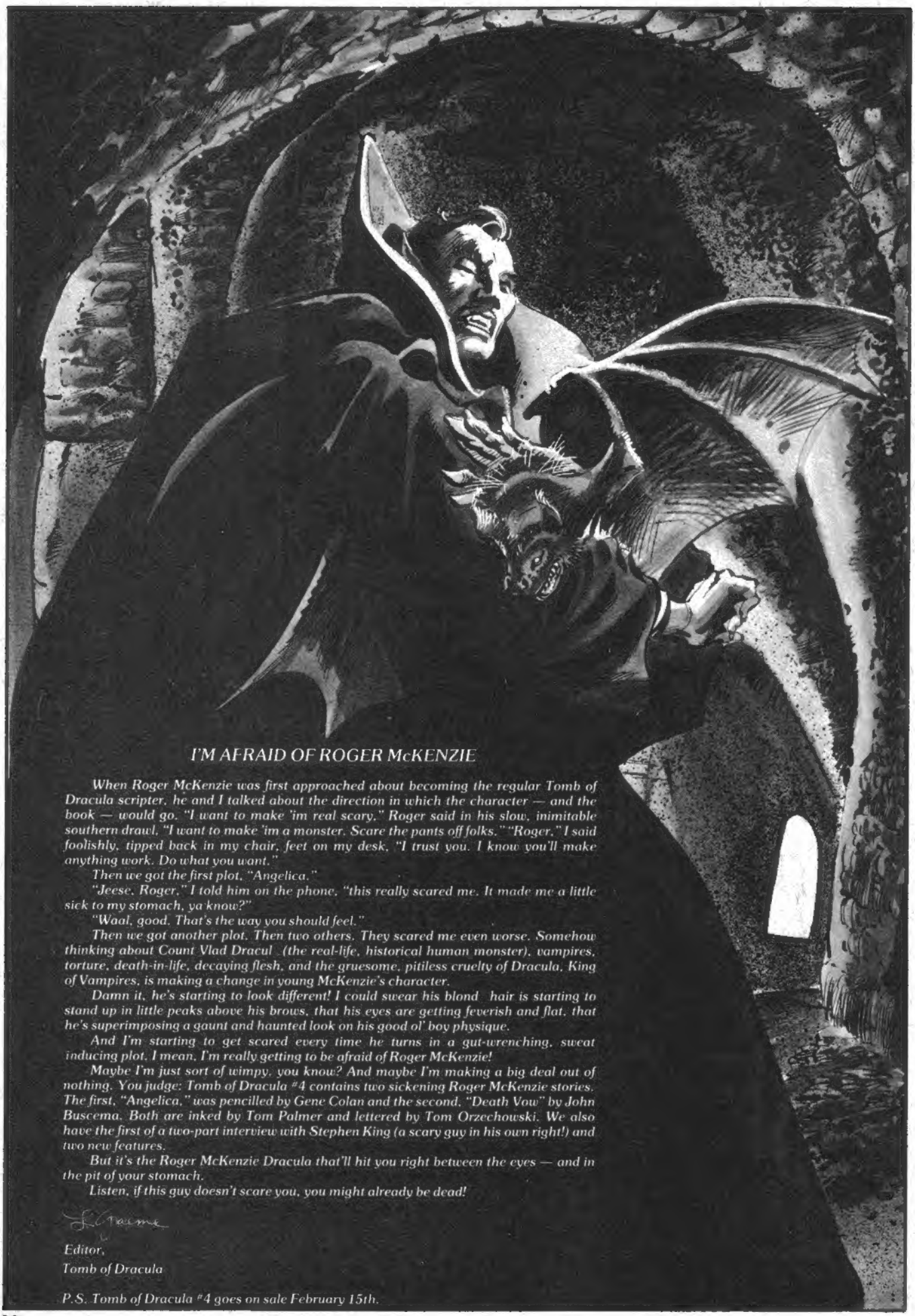
ANOTHER CREATURE! IT WAS WAITING HERE ALL THE TIME!
THIS DAMNED PLANET'S FULL OF THEM.

WELL, THIS ONE'S NOT GETTING THE CHANCE TO KILL US.
NO! YOU MUSTN'T! YOU MUSTN'T!

I THOUGHT YOU LEARNED, WILSON I THOUGHT YOU FINALLY REALIZED WHAT AN IDIOT YOU WERE.
THIS IS A MONSTER, WILSON--A MINDLESS CREATURE THAT ONLY WANTS TO SUCK YOUR BONES DRY. AND YOU WANT IT TO LIVE!
NO! YOU'RE THE FOOL. DON'T YOU SEE WHAT THAT THING IS?
DAMN IT, WILSON--BUT YOU'RE HOPELESS--TOTALLY HOPELESS.

YEAH--I SEE IT--I SEE A MONSTER THAT WANTED TO SLAY US--
--AND I SEE THAT I KILLED IT BEFORE IT GOT THE CHANCE.

THEN YOU DON'T SEE-- YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND.
LOOK AT THE THING, KING--SEE THAT BLACK LIQUID OOZING FROM IT!
THAT ISN'T BLOOD, KING-- THAT ISN'T BLOOD!
THAT'S DEATH-- THE TOTAL EMBODIMENT OF ALL DEATH!
WATCH THIS, KING--LOOK WHAT IT DOES TO MY HAND! LOOK!
OH MY GOD! IT'S DISSOLVED YOUR HAND FLESH, BLOOD, BONE AND ALL!
AND IT'S NOT-- GOING TO STOP AT THAT, KING!
THIS BLACKNESS IS GOING TO SPREAD ALL ACROSS THE UNIVERSE... ALL OVER EVERY EXISTING WORLD--
AND EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE DESTROYED AS EASILY AS MY HAND.
ALL BECAUSE OF YOU! ALL BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE--YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND!
THIS ISN'T A MUSEUM--THIS IS A TEMPLE--A CHURCH! AND IT HONORS ITS ANGELS WHO CAME FROM HERE--WHO WERE SENT TO OTHER WORLDS TO TEACH THEM THE WAYS OF THEIR LORD AND MASTER
THOSE STATUES IN THE HALLWAY WERE THE ANGELS, KING--
--AND YOU'VE DESTROYED THEM ALL.
YOU SEE, KING--I WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG-- THERE IS A GOD--!
--AND YOU'VE KILLED HIM!!
GOOD LORD!
CHOKE!
AND GOD NEVER SAW THE DARKNESS, AND NEVER KNEW THAT IT WAS GOOD.
FIN



I'M AFRAID OF ROGER McKENZIE

When Roger McKenzie was first approached about becoming the regular Tomb of Dracula scripter, he and I talked about the direction in which the character — and the book — would go. "I want to make 'im real scary," Roger said in his slow, inimitable southern drawl, "I want to make 'im a monster. Scare the pants off folks." "Roger," I said foolishly, tipped back in my chair, feet on my desk, "I trust you. I know you'll make anything work. Do what you want."

Then we got the first plot, "Angelica."

"Jeese, Roger," I told him on the phone, "this really scared me. It made me a little sick to my stomach, ya know?"

"Waal, good. That's the way you should feel."

Then we got another plot. Then two others. They scared me even worse. Somehow thinking about Count Vlad Dracul (the real-life, historical human monster), vampires, torture, death-in-life, decaying flesh, and the gruesome, pitiless cruelty of Dracula, King of Vampires, is making a change in young McKenzie's character.

Damn it, he's starting to look different! I could swear his blond hair is starting to stand up in little peaks above his brows, that his eyes are getting feverish and flat, that he's superimposing a gaunt and haunted look on his good ol' boy physique.

And I'm starting to get scared every time he turns in a gut-wrenching, sweat inducing plot. I mean, I'm really getting to be afraid of Roger McKenzie!

Maybe I'm just sort of wimpy, you know? And maybe I'm making a big deal out of nothing. You judge: Tomb of Dracula #4 contains two sickening Roger McKenzie stories. The first, "Angelica," was pencilled by Gene Colan and the second, "Death Vow" by John Buscema. Both are inked by Tom Palmer and lettered by Tom Orzechowski. We also have the first of a two-part interview with Stephen King (a scary guy in his own right!) and two new features.

But it's the Roger McKenzie Dracula that'll hit you right between the eyes — and in the pit of your stomach.

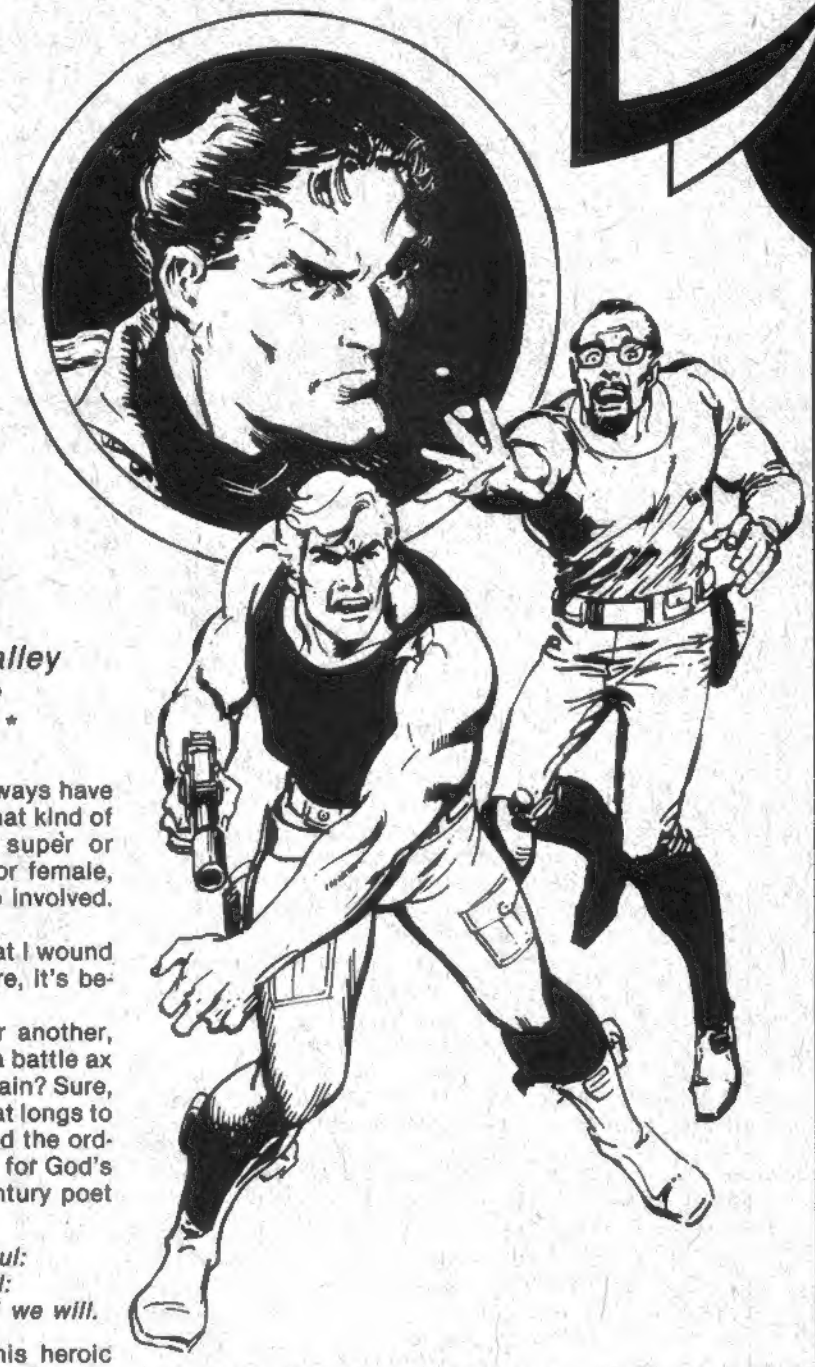
Listen, if this guy doesn't scare you, you might already be dead!

Editor,
Tomb of Dracula

P.S. Tomb of Dracula #4 goes on sale February 15th.

OF HEROES AND THE BIZARRE

A Confession Of Sorts
By Roger Stern



Stand or fall, I know
There shall be peace in the valley
And it's all an affair of my life
*With the Heroes and Villains.**

I'm a sucker for stories about heroes. I always have been, always will be. It doesn't matter what kind of hero — swashbuckling or mysterious, super or normal, tall or short, young or old, male or female, whatever — just as long as there's a hero involved. And the more bizarre the hero, the better.

It's because of this interest in heroes that I wound up writing comics for a living. Chances are, it's because of heroes that you read them.

Admit it: haven't we all, at one time or another, wished we could grab a sword or a pistol, a battle ax or a ray gun, and take on some heinous villain? Sure, we have! There's something inside of us that longs to break free and rise above the mundane and the ordinary — to go out there and *do* something, for God's sake! Matthew Arnold, the noted 19th century poet put it best:

Strong is the soul, and wise, and beautiful:
The seeds of godlike power are in us still:
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will.

Most of us, of course, never realize this heroic potential. Instead, we let those "seeds of godlike power" manifest themselves in more practical ways, transforming us into lawyers or steelworkers or poker players, if we ever let them surface at all. Real heroes tend to be a very rare breed, and that's probably just as well. A world of four billion living, breathing, fighting heroes would be a *dangerous* place to live.

But even if we can't all be heroes, we can indulge ourselves with an occasional heroic fantasy. Indulging in stories of heroic fantasy is, after all, a time-honored tradition that has probably been with us ever since Thudd the Caveman first regaled his buddies with a yarn about the big mastodon that got away. Fortunately, not all stories of heroism are *that* old. In fact, over the millenia we've managed to come up with a goodly number of stories and variations on stories, some of great sophistication.

The theme of these stories, however, has remained basically the same: the hero — an uncommon individual, endowed with great reserves of courage — takes on some incredible menace, or achieves some great goal, through various combinations of strength, agility, cunning, skill, and divine grace. In traditional heroic mythos, the hero is usually one who is favored by the gods, perhaps even descended from divinity himself (or herself, as the case may be).

But I digress. We were speaking — somewhat egocentrically, I'm afraid — about the fascination with heroes.

The great thing about fictional heroes — whether they're manifested as giants on a silver screen, images flashing boldly across an orthicon tub, or humble little lines on paper — is that you can let them do all the dirty work for you. If a boring, workday reality is getting you down, you can escape into a weird, supernatural realm with a Dr. Strange or a Merlin. If you're intrigued by events on an international

scale, you can become a part of them through the identity of a James Bond, a Nicholas Fury, or a Natasha Romanoff. And if there's just something that's making you mad, you can Hulk-out and smash it into oblivion. (Take it from a former writer of the big, green guy's exploits, this can be *extremely* therapeutic!) All it takes is a little imagination and — voila! — you're there. And once you've reached the proper plateau of escape, you can hop right back to reality without so much as soiling your shoes.

It's hard to think of something more enjoyable than a good flight of fancy that is not illegal, immoral, or fattening. And, let's face it, everyone could use a little escape now and then... even comics editors.

And that, in a very sneaky way, brings us to the story behind the stories of BIZARRE ADVENTURES.

It all began mere weeks ago (as of this writing), when Lynn Graeme, the editor of this particular line of magazines, was pondering a gap in the MARVEL PREVIEW schedule. I happened to be wandering around her office that day, poking through a stack of HOWARD THE DUCK pages and kibitzing with Ralph Macchio. Anyway, after several minutes of just generally making a nuisance of myself, I noticed that Lynn hadn't thrown me out of the office yet. As a matter of fact, she seemed to be staring a hole in the wall.

"Is something the matter?" I asked.

"We've decided to table the SPIDER-MAN issue of MARVEL PREVIEW, and we need a replacement for it almost immediately," Lynn sighed, momentarily snapping back to reality. "Do you have any ideas?"

"Well, how about a BEST OF PREVIEW issue or something along those lines? We have plenty of good stories that, for some reason or another, didn't get much exposure the first time around. We could put a few of them together... sort of an anthology format... and come up with a really nice looking magazine.

Lynn began to smile. "If you can find me a whole issue of good material, I'll... I'll make you a consulting editor! I'll buy your lunch! I'll make you famous! But I need the stuff fast!"

"Tomorrow," I promised, and headed home for some late night research.

Well, by this time, you can imagine my fiendish glee at being handed what amounted to *carte blanche* to assemble a list of my favorite Marvel magazine stories. And there was a lot to choose from! After an evening of pouring over my treasured old volumes, I'd found enough material for three issues of MARVEL PREVIEW. And — what a coincidence! — each and every one of those stories was a heroic fantasy of one form or another.

The four stories included in this issue are, I think, among the best. They are definitely bizarre. If you do like them, drop us a line and tell us! And then, who knows, maybe someday we could get together for a whole new series of BIZARRE ADVENTURES.

And wouldn't *that* be fun!

Letters

Star-Lord is the unqualified hit of the decade. With his numerous appearances here in his first home, PREVIEW, and his triumphant full-color blockbuster in SUPER SPECIAL #10, your demand for more of Peter Quill and "Ship" has expanded in quantum leaps. We want to say to one and all that we definitely have more Star-Lord planned for the future, though we can't guarantee he'll be seen streaking off into his own mag as yet. In the meantime, sit back and enjoy your own commentary on our cosmic crusader's twin classics in PREVIEW #18 and SUPER SPECIAL #10...

Dear People,

MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL #10 ranks as one of the best things Marvel has produced and the best Science Fiction to appear in comics form.

Chris Claremont molded Star-Lord into one of comics' greatest characters. Doug Moench did the impossible: he improved him. Whereas Chris handled the strip as a character study with Science Fiction plots, Doug handles it as a Science Fiction strip with the greatest character since Norrin Radd. Just take a gander at "World in a Bottle." Black holes, generation ships, technology, deep space: this is what SF is all about.

Though "World in a Bottle" was great, no story is without its flaws. In this case, it was the ark. The concept of the generation ship is one of SF's oldest and greatest. From Heinlein's *Universe* to Star Trek's *For the World is Hollow and I have Touched The Sky*, it has been used with verve, panache, and more technical accuracy than in here. A ship a light-year long could not sustain a society. For starters there would be 2.94 people for every mile. Second, there would be a breakdown in communication as it would take over a year for a message to go from one end to the other. This would cause separate societies every few thousand miles after a few generations. As to the problem of population density, I suggest you read Larry Niven's *Ringworld*. (I also suggest that you adapt it, but that's another story.)

When I said I didn't want Star-Lord's adventures published in color (see Marvel Preview #16), I didn't know that the incomparable duo of Gene Colan and Tom Palmer would be handling the art. Their version of Star-Lord (like every other artist who's drawn him) is original, distinctive, and mind-boggling. I particularly enjoyed pages eight through 13 (are you sure you didn't photograph it?) and page 26, panel three. Gene and Tom have really found their niche in Marvel Color. Comic art may never be the same.

"To Sleep. Perchance To... Die!" was just another comic book Science Fiction story. No characterization, flat plot and a twist ending. It held my interest but gave me no real thrill. Ernie Colon's art work was great, though. Very Gil Kane-ish, but not so much as to be a copy of his style. The coloring was also great. It was simple, light and unobtrusive.

As far as back-up stories go, I suggest four possibilities. One, adapt classic SF short stories or novels. Two, bring back Bill Mantlo's "Sword in the Star". Three, do all Star-Lord issues without backup. Four, bring back the Silver Surfer! Could any true Marvelite pass up the Silver Surfer and Star-Lord in one book?

Jon Green
415 Shelter Rd.
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779

Jon, if we had a dime for every time someone in the batty Bullpen or in a letter such as yours chastized us for that light year long ark gaffe, we'd be rich enough to rest on our laurels. All we can say is, if it's okay for some nut in silver skin to fly through space on a surfboard of all things, than we can get away with a big ark...oh, you don't buy that, huh. We didn't think so.

And speaking of the Silver Surfer, we'd like to mention in answer to your (and a million other queries) that ol' Norrin Radd will soon be coming your way in the first fantabulous issue of the greatest magazine of all time—EPIC ILLUSTRATED. And it's to be brought to you by the team supreme: Stan Lee and John Buscema! The premiere ish of EPIC will be out sometime in the fall. You won't have a hard time finding it on the stands either, because it'll be sporting a cover by Marvel newcomer—*Frank Frazetta!* You heard it here first folks.

Dear Preview,

I had to write to someone about MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL No. 10...It was out of this world! I've never seen Star-Lord look so good! The cover alone was beautiful, it reminded me of Boris Vallejo, a Sci-Fi artist (Thank you Earl, and Peter.) Now if that wasn't enough his story "World in a Bottle" was one of the best I've read in a long time! Oh, and the color...incredible! One of my favorite "parts of art" was on page 35 when Star-Lord, and Aletha were being attacked by the space ark's fighters. Aletha herself (with the "smoke") was lovely. Ship must have approved of the Star-Lord's choice. Well all I can say is, keep up the GREAT WORK, and make the cover into a poster!

Daniel Garcia
3305 E. Hunter St.
Los Angeles, CA 90023

Hello Doug,

Sometime last year, I wrote you a letter about the callous and depersonalized deaths meted out in comic books, working my anger off on your own MASTER OF KUNG FU. Your answer to my outburst was both convincing and touching—and radically altered my perception of you and the writing you do. On the one hand, I began to take you seriously as an author, something I certainly don't do in the case of very many comics scripters. On the other hand, and perhaps more gratifying to you, I began to actively seek out comics you've written, even titles I don't usually buy.

Which brings me to Star-Lord in MARVEL PREVIEW #18. I would never have read this except that you are credited as the writer. Star-Lord, as a character-concept, isn't my type of thing. I tend to prefer the rain-soaked alleys of Central City to the star-spawned wonders of the cosmos. But because you wrote it, I read it.

Now we've come full circle, haven't we? Peter Quill's thoughts and actions evoke all the feelings which were in my heart as I wrote to you about the danger of cloaking agony in heroism. Quill's face as he kills the Beast-Man is the face of one who realizes that the being he is destroying is *not* "a comic book villain" but a living entity, an irreplaceable member of his universe.

Doug, you may become the Harvey Kurtzman or Will Eisner of your generation if you keep this up. And I hope you know me well enough to know that I don't devalue my praises by scattering them before people whose only claim to fame is their "professionalism." I want you to know that whatever my admiration of your work is—it is *not* "uncritical." So thank you for a fine story.

Cat Yronwode
Route 1 Box 287
Willow Springs, MO 65793

Ahhh, Cat, we love ya. You've so perfectly placed your figurative finger on exactly what Doug was trying to convey in "Less Than Human" there's so very little we can add, except to let you know that Doug Moench extends his personal thanks for your brief but perceptive explication on his work. Keep reading, keep thinking—and keep writing. You're one very special lady up here.

PREVIEW REVIEW
Marvel Magazine Department
575 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022